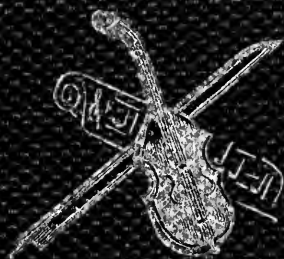


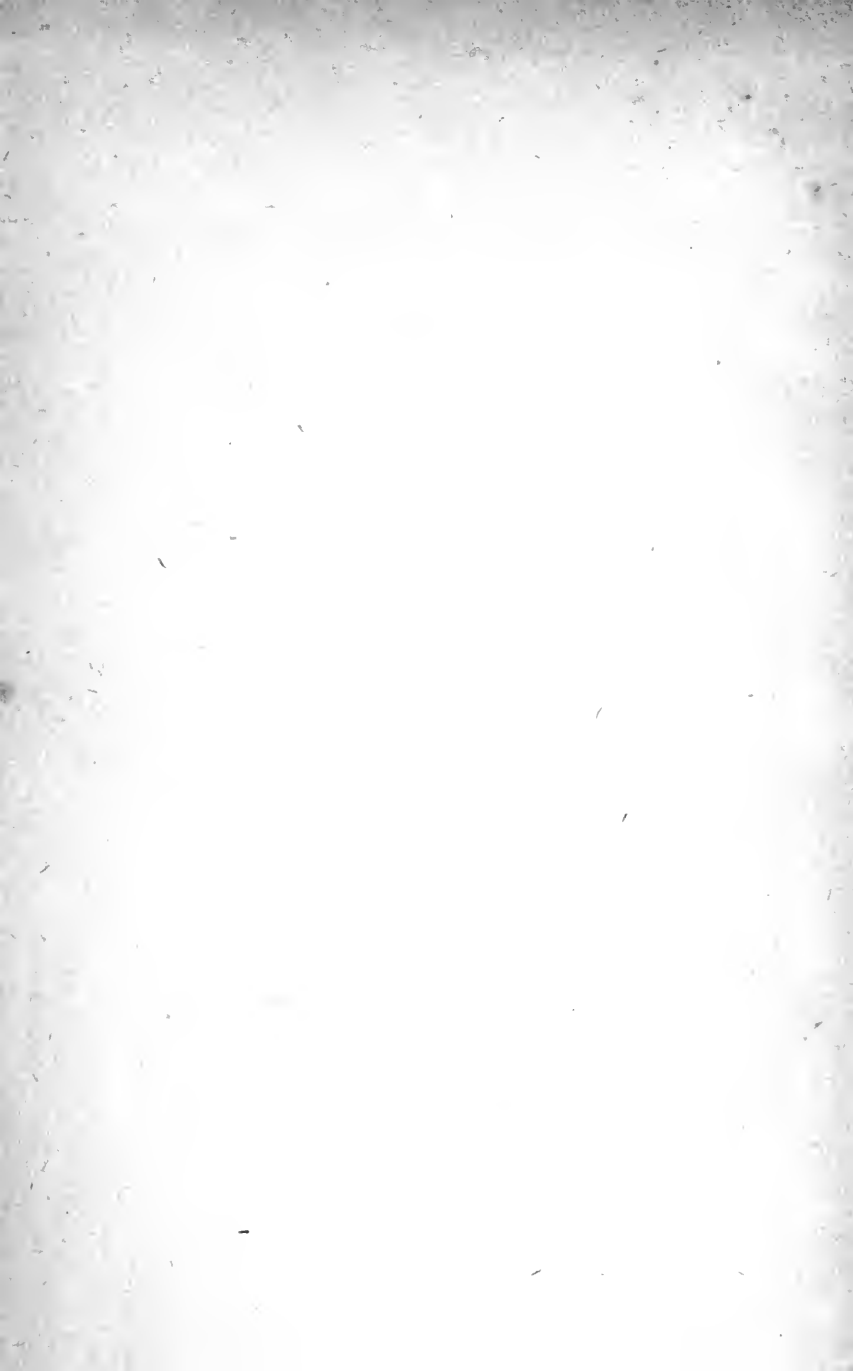
Songs of the Sahkohnagas



Hugh Dameron



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SONGS
OF THE
SAHKOHNAGAS

BY
HUGH DEVERON

THE
Abbey Press

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SONGS OF THE SAHKOHNAGAS.

The Legend of Herbert's Spring.*

WHERE Kullasaja's crystal founts first leap,
Southward not far stands fair Satula's steep,
Thence northeast, lo!—a mountain Monarch
frowns,
His crest still green, though russet grays and
browns
And purpling shadows touch the giddy heights,
Where Isundayga's precipices catch the lights
Of saffron dawns.

Our ridgy realm unrolled
Shows not one other summit—half as bold

* Kullasaja and Satoola, near Highlands, Macon Co.; Isundayga, the grand precipice of White-Sides Mt.; Yonahlossee, the Grandfather Mt.; Salola is Sugar Loaf near Hendersonville, No. Car.; Sahkohnagas, the great Blue Ridge range; Tenniseeta is Little Tennessee River; Toxaway is Great Hog Back near Sapphire; and Cashiers Valley lies west of Chimney Top (Kayoolianta).

8 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

As this "Old Stonewall." Facing east—it
 towers

Above Chatooga's forestry and Cashier's fields
 of flowers.

In all the leafy Over Hills of Ottaray,
Not one to match with Isundayga grim and
 gray:—

Not Linville's Towers, not the cliffs of Doe,—
Nor where the Sachem's Head sees fair Saluda
 far below;—

Not the bold cliffs that cradle Congaree
That 'neath Salola's crags flows southward to
 the sea;

Not Yonahlossee, though his rocky crown
Sends far Watauga's waters foaming down
In dark ravines, where clustering pink and
 white,

The rhododendron blooms star all the leafy
 night;—

Nor yet sharp Kayoolanta, whose bold belfry
 flings

Its morning shadows on fair Cashier's springs.

Eastward the billowy ridges of blue Toxaway,
That hides a "Sapphire" in his heart to-day,
And laves his feet in lakelets that declare

The Legend of Herbert's Spring. 9

The Heaven's glory ever mirrored there;
Westward the Nantahaylehs, and the near
Cowees

That toss their summits like tumultuous seas;
Between these two,—Sahkohnaga's blue walls
Hearkening the married murmurs of Chatoo-
ga's falls,

Where Isundayga's sovereign summit stands,
Rock-crested Monarch of these Leafy Lands.
Here in a glen, where foliage—flower and fern
Roof with tints—green or gay—the bickering
burn,

Hides Herbert's Spring, whose waters westward
flow

To where the Tenniseeta, in green vales below,
Bears generous tribute—not lean stinted alms—
To that far West—where flows the stream of
Palms,

Whose waters, widening slowly to deep Seas
Belt with their billows all the Antilles.

The wanderer who passes here by chance,
Hunter or Trapper, ere he sees the glance
Of these clear waters, or their rippling flow,
Hears in these sylvan wilds a Fairy Bugle
blow.

Sweet as the echoes of remembered song
Ere love and loss had tangled right and wrong,
The ringing notes—now distant and now near—
Like lullabies of childhood charm the listening
ear,

Like songs of Sirens on the silvering seas,
Allure him step by step through thickening
trees,—

Over the ridges, down the dark ravines,—
From crest to crest,—until he wearied leans
Above a Fountain's brink; and in its depths—
behold!

A New World mirrored.

Fairer skies unrolled,
Bosomed like Goddesses blue mountains show,
And valleys—blossom braided—sleep below
Where winding rivers—that a forest girds—
Dance to the music of a thousand birds.
A thousand pictured scenes revolving pass
Across its bosom; and in this clear glass—
This Magic Mirror, whose reflections bring
Even to Winter frosts the flowers of fadeless
Spring,—

Lo! should he love—a fairer face there peeps
From out the darkness of these dimpled
deeps;—

The Legend of Herbert's Spring. 11

A face so fair, with lips of rose, and eyes,
So wonderful, that every old love dies,
And this new passion thrills him through and
 through.

Recalls no longer Home, or those he knew,
His past life fading like forgotten dreams;
The wider World, and all its cares and
 schemes—

Not blur'd—but blotted out; no Yesterday,
To-morrow dimly visioned, but Hope's sway
To-day triumphant; and the Present's Wall
Prisons his soul.

 He lives the thrall
Of these bewitching waters, and their spells
 shall hold
For seven sweet years of dulcet dreamings, that
 though false
Yet bring no tears or tempests. Hope never
 halts,
And Doubt lies dead.

 So long, through Winter's cold
And Summer's heat, in these wild woods he
 roves,
Climbs the bold crests and threads the embow-
 ered groves,

Seeking this "Loltee" of the Highlands, this
fair witch

Who now the Fountain holds—and now some
rocky niche.

Ever so soft and sweet, now near—now far,
She calls to him from summits gray,—from
cliff or scar;

Or, hidden shyly in June's leafy bowers,
Whispers him hope from the unfolding flowers;
Woos him with glances from the cascade's snow,
Beckoning with waving hands where blossoms
blow,

Sings him glad songs that make his pulses leap,
And when night darkens kissed his eyes to sleep.

Each night he dreams her rosy lips close
pressed,

Each morn renews the eager, endless quest;
Yet, not unhappy, for this witching draught,
If only once in all the seven years deeply
quaffed,

Fires his blood with such unwonted life—
Hope never fails him, through the stress and
strife

Of daily struggles with the wilderness.

The Winter's snow fades fast before one melting
kiss

The Legend of Herbert's Spring. 13

Laid on his lips in slumber; and the summer
seems

A golden Eden, where—half lost in dreams—
He climbs blue peaks, hearing her wooing calls
In the warm breath of winds and songs of water-
falls.

In every woodland there are bridal bowers,
Her flying footsteps bend the fern, and in fair
flowers

He finds the fragrance of her breath, and in the
skies

Sees the soft azure of her glorious eyes.

So seven years the Wanderer ever roves

From crest to crest,—

Through all the glens and groves;

Day after day climbs leafy spurs and lifted
spires;

His heart beats high, his footstep never tires.

Confiding, as a child, he knows no sorrow,

For if To-day brings failure—there's a fair
To-morrow;

And this fond Witch, who kissed his lips last
night,

Shall break like morning on his dazzled sight,

14 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

In her white arms shall hold him fast, and melt
His soul with blisses mortals never felt.

Of his Dead Past no faintest whisper stirs;
Couched on dark crags beneath the dusk of firs,
He sees afar the valleys once his Home,
Yet now recalls no paths he used to roam;
Old Loves—old Losses—leave no faintest
mark;
Cares only for this luring Loltee's fickle kiss,
And finds in these bewitching dreams a dearer
bliss
Than ever mortal maiden's fond rendition
That ripened into full fruition.

So seven years of dulcet, dazzling dreams,
Of wanderings by the banks of lapsing streams
And on the brows of lifted peaks:—then slum-
ber deep
For seven days, when slow the circling shadows
creep,
And not one star—not one stray sunbeam
brings
To the lost soul the shape of Earthly things.
Then an awakening, slow and soft as when
On long numbed wits fair Reason dawns again;

The Legend of Herbert's Spring. 15

And one by one, old loves, and older hopes
Return like penitents; and strengthening Mem-
ory gropes

Her way back lamely,—step by step, and sees
At last the old landmarks, hears forgotten
pleas.

The hearthstone flames again, whisper sealed
lips,

Hearts beat once more—long lost in dark
eclipse.

Then the lost Wanderer — wondering—turns
slowly back

To search through forest mazes for the long lost
track;

Through cloud and sunshine,—half in joy—
half tears,—

Faces once more the long forgotten years,
And finds perhaps in some fond maiden's arms
Still lures to win him from the rosy charms
Of that fair Witch, whose wooing, winsome
face,—

Whose flowery lips—whose magic—and whose
grace,

Whate'er life brings,—of sunny joy or sad
regret,—

His dreaming soul shall never quite forget!

My Pearl of Pacolet !

Down by pebbly Pacolet where the Kalmias
cluster,

And the cascade's melting mists catch the rain-
bow's luster,

Sits a dainty mountain maiden—curtained
close by leaves,

By the shadows half-way hidden that the Rho-
dodendron weaves.

Round about her tresses a golden halo swims,
Whiter than the lily buds are her lissome limbs,
Bluer than the gentian tips gleam her sunny
eyes,

Far too rosy are her lips e'er to mate with sighs.

There she sits and suns herself in an amorous
ray

That hath wandered to these depths from the
upper day ;

And this rosy harbinger of love's warmer glow
Kisses first her dimpled cheeks, then—her bos-
om's snow.

Soft the sunlight touches her with a wand of
gold,
Whilst the breezes whisper shyly tales the
flowers told;
And she first looks up and laughs, then looks
down and sighs:
Something learned of late by heart makes her
feel—so wise.

Far too wise for flippancies, far too glad for
tears,
Whilst she numbers solemnly—all her Sixteen
years;
Counts the flowery Aprils over since those ear-
lier Springs
When Life's beckoning blisses lent her light
heart errant wings.

Thus she sits and memories scarcely twelve-
hours old
Round about her budding breasts like glad arms
enfold;
And she hears the murmurings soft of the busy
breeze
Whispering loving prophecies to the listening
trees.

18 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Purest Pearl of Pacolet, what is then your
dream?

Down the tides that foam and fret, borne upon
the stream,

Lo! the Fairy of the Falls, in a white canoe,
Glides above the milky mists—beckoning to
you.

He crowns your curls with Kalmias paler than
your cheek,

With cold kisses makes you dumb—though you
fain would speak;

Veils with jealous mists your charms, lays your
dainty limbs

On a couch in grotto lonely that eternal dark-
ness dims.

Bears you from these sunny skies to the depths
below,

And your bosom's blossoms turn cold and white
as snow;

Your sweet lips forget to laugh, and your heart
to dream:

Lo! your bridal bed a bier—shadowed by the
stream

Then the Fairy of the Falls lays his finger tips
Lightly on the fading petals of your flower-like
lips;

Like a lily maiden sinking in a marble sleep,
Soft and silent there you lie, whilst your lovers
weep.

Nay! my Pearl of Pacolet, not all the Fairy
Kings,

Though they led their legions onward waving
rainbow'd wings,

Though they launched the leaping thunder from
Heaven's darkening dome,

Sweetest, should not overwhelm you under flash of
fire and foam.

Not a mist-made shadow gliding through the
treacherous gloom

Lays warm lips persuasive on your cheek's re-
turning bloom,

And the arms that hold you boldly—bear you
to no bier:—

Hark! the breezes whisper stories that the blos-
soms blush to hear.

Hide your ripening roses, sweetest, close within
my arms;

Love alone, Our Lord, uncloses here the casket
of your charms;

Whilst the snowy foam is falling, and the milky
mist upcurls,

In the Summer's starlit gloaming—I have
found my Pearl of Pearls.

Roofed by Rhododendron blooms, fenced about
with flowers,

Here for my heart's lady-love Cupid weaves his
bowers;

And whilst mists are rising softly where the
streamlets fret,

Love unlocks thy heart's rich casket, Pearl of
Pacolett.

The Swannanoa River, No. Ca.

FAIR Nymph, whose mossy cradle lies,
By dusky hemlocks hidden,
Near rocky crests that court the skies,
Yet not by storms unhidden;—
Could Fancy weave on Fairy looms
Such loveliness as dowers
The Mountain Ivy's dimpled blooms,—
The Laurel's freckled flowers?

And these are but thy birthday gifts,
E'er yet beneath the bracken
The foam-flakes, white as Winter's drifts,
Their hurrying currents slacken
To slower pace, as maidens do,
Who will not fly—though fearing;
And thou beginst to linger, too,
By cabin and by clearing.

Above, from many a crag and scarp
Thy torrents leaped in laughter;
Soft as some far Æolian harp—

22 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

One heard sweet echoings after ;
And where the Lash-horn's dusky spears*
The rocky ridges fretted,
With sunny smiles and stormy tears,
Thy fickle streams coquetted.

But here, where Chestnut's creamy plumes
Whiten the winding hollow,
And golden-rods or grassy glumes
The rambling roadside follow,
These woodland ways are banished quite ;
She moves along sedately,
No nimble Nymph in frolic flight,
But steadier—almost stately.

Near her tall Elms and Sycamores,
The Valley's queen attending,
Above the curves of pebbly shores
Their leafy limbs are bending ;
But though the envious woodlands still
May hide her from some lover,
She bares her bosom with a thrill
To the broad skies above her.

* " Lash-horn," very descriptive name of the Virginia Mountaineer's near White-top (Kaunayrock) for the " balsam " or " spruce." The French Broad (Zeh-leeka) is the " Racing River."

The rocky crests are far above
Where Laurel thickets darken,
Below are valleys where young Love
Finds hearts that heed and hearken;
Tempestuous toil and tumult past,
Lo! on her bosom sleeping,
The smiling skies look down at last;
There Heaven some tryst seems keeping.

Born where the dusky "balsams" frown,
Where the cloud-wrack gathers dimly,
And the cascade's showers come leaping down
From gray crests rising grimly;
Between the Blue Ridge and The Blacks
Fair Swannanoah finds her fountains;
For ten good miles she never slacks,
But slips past half a dozen mountains:

Past a good score of cabins runs,
By fifty fields and fifty fallows,
Yet still half-hid from summer suns
With deeper flow or wider shallows;
At last her stainless tribute brings,
With many a sigh and quiver,
As a maiden who half sighs—half sings,
When she weds the "Racing River."

the Eyes of Nantabayleh ! *

“BLUE EYES” of “Nantahayleh,”
These blossoms blooming fair
When September days dawn grayly,
And the mountain beeches bare;
The vales and valleys under,
Though still leafed, begin to show
Faint glimpses of the wonder
Of the woods,—when all aglow

With the touch of Autumn’s fires:—
Glint of crimson—gleam of gold,
And about the Alpine spires
Soft the sunlit mists are rolled.
E’er October’s frosts grow bitter,—
E’er November winds blow bleak,—
Where the golden-rods still glitter
On the prairies of the peak;

* This mountain group in Western North Carolina attains to about 5,500 feet. On their summits in September flowers the Fringed Gentian.

On the mountain meadows spreading
 From the "Wayah" to the "Wine,"
 Though the beech its brown leaves shedding,
 Softly fringed, these "Blue Eyes" shine:—
 "Blue Eyes" of "Nantahayleh,"
 Opening here in flowery guise,
 Drinking in the sunlight daily,—
 Filled with secrets of the skies.

Can your lassies show me bluer
 When I kiss their rosy lips?
 Can your ladies show me truer
 When Life's hopes are in eclipse?
 Nay! I'll trust these "Blue Eyes" blooming
 Spite of leaf-fall and of frost:—
 Though the grayest shadows glooming,
 These tell us Hope's not lost.

When "Blue Eyes" of "Nantahayleh"
 To the dark days beauty bring,
 I read prophecies that gaily
 Predict the deathless Spring:—
 After the Autumn's fading,
 After the snowflakes fall,
 Comes Hope—the blind heart aiding,
 Comes Love—the Best of all.

26 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

“Blue Eyes” of “Nantahayleh,”

With fringed lids—opening shy,

“Blue Eyes” that peep out gaily

Through clouds to yonder sky;

Fair signs and tokens given

To show how Nature gives:—

The Soul that loves is shriven,

The heart that hungers lives!

The "Wine Spring." *

WHERE "Nantahayleh's" billows rise
In close communion with the skies,
A dimpled dell the forest folds
That at its heart a fountain holds,
Whose waters sparkle like the draught
That sometimes turns a tippler daft;
For here despite the Winter's frost
That even June hath not quite lost,—
Some wooing Witch hath laid soft spells
On every dazzling drop that wells.

Worn wanderers from the narrow streets
Who fly the city's burning heats,
And seek the welcome of these heights,
The Highland's temperate days and nights;
After a climb of two good leagues
Forget their struggles and fatigues,
Whilst here beneath the cloudless blue,
They sip these draughts of "Mountain Dew."

* The "Wine Spring" is at elevation of over 5,000 feet near crest of one of the Nantahayleh "balds," Macon County, No. Car.

No Mænads golden goblets fill,
With fiery poison from the still,
Yet if the bubbling bliss you quaff
The saddest soul should learn to laugh;
The heart, to Hope a stranger long,
Shall sing again a Summer song;
The lips that sighed shall smile once more,
And kisses come—denied before.

Not grapes that gild the castled Rhine
When soft September's sunbeams shine,
Nor ruddier vintages of France
That lead the Loves a merry dance;
Nor richer draughts from sunny Spain,
Nor "Christ's Tears" from the Roman plain,
Shall send such subtle fires through
Your languid veins, as this clear dew,
Dipp'd in a hallowed leaf from this
Cool spring the morning cloudlets kiss.

And as you sip the liquid pearls,
Look down and see your lassie's curls,
Her eyes of blue—her lips of rose
Reflected where this fountain flows;
And if you'd learn this spring's full power
Pluck from its brink the gentian flower,
Whose blue eyes—half closed, as is meet—

Give happy hints to hearts discreet;
For, if you would not break the spell,
Kiss as you please—but—never tell.

If thus, with her you love the best,
For this fair fountain you make quest,
If thus together on its brink
You bend and from leafed cuplets drink,
Its sparkling draughts I know shall thrill
More sweetly than the wines that fill
The brimming bumpers that a King
Might give to Lords who tribute bring:
For love is here the liberal host,
And lovers—guests he likes the most.

This spring that in these forest gloom
Gleams starlike under ferny plumes,
Gives draughts so full of subtle fire—
Despite its frost—to wake desire,
And woo back Hope from Eden's lost;
That sad souls—tempest-torn and tossed—
Now savoring the sweets of love
Once mourned as dead, here couched above
Where billowy summits softly kissed
At sunrise by the morning mist,—
As here with laughing lips they sing,—
Call this Dan Cupid's "Tippling Spring."

The Siren of Sachem's Head!

(A Legend of Caesar's Head, South Carolina.)

WHERE clear Saluda first leaps out
From tufts of Blue-Ridge bracken,
With ripplings that both smile and pout
For leagues before they slacken;
Where grape-vines flaunt their greenest flags
Above the woodland spires,
Rise gray and grim TAHNOHLA's crags,—
Facing Day's dying fires.

Its massive frontage, like the face
Of warrior gray and hoary,
Lends a grim weirdness to the place
With echoes of old story;—
Above, a scalp-lock of dark pines,—
Below, a front of granite—
Rugged and wrinkled in its lines,—
Fierce frowning as you scan it.
Yet seem these slopes of billowy green
Unchanged by snows or summers,
As leafy as of old when seen

The Siren of Sachem's Head. 31

By those long-lost First-comers
Who, voyaging from far shores, beheld,
In years that none remember,
This brow of rock, as old as Eld,
Flushed by the sunset's ember.

In those first fiery days of Earth
A warrior chief, titanic,
Still lusty with primeval birth,
And pulsed by veins volcanic,
Ruled o'er this dim deserted Land,
Where eddying storm-clouds drifted,
A pine-tree scepter in his hand
Above the vales uplifted.

But with the ages that have flown,
The snows of many winters,
The old-time Sachem's granite throne
Has crumbled into splinters;
Stone-blind and gray with countless years,
We now may safely beard him,
Though once he launched such fiery spears
That all the Titans feared him.

But now the Fairies in the fern
Above his brow hold revels,

32 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

And buried deep in caverns stern
 Lie locked his stormy devils;
Whilst at his feet, Alta, dusk-eyed,
 A nut-brown Indian Lorey,
Hath lured a thousand hearts aside
 Since first she told her story.

Hath lured them on with starry eyes,
 And lulled them into slumber
With subtle smiles and soothing sighs,
 Whilst Life grew numb and number;
And where Saluda silvering gleams
 Beneath her woodland covers,
Lost in a Land of endless Dreams,
 Lie all her drowsy lovers.

Ware Witch! who lures her lovers so:—
 What help for those who love thee?
The woods are dark as night below,
 Dim shine the stars above thee;
Thy loves know neither hopes nor schemes,
 Long lost both rut and reckoning;
Lo! opens wide the gate of Dreams,
 Where Alta's self stands beckoning.

Her eyes are like the stars of eve
 From cloudy coverts shining;

The Siren of Sachem's Head. 33

With waving hands such spells she'll weave
 (All lovers' dreams divining),
That those who pause to scan the deep
 Beneath TAHNOHLA's precipices,
Are lured to take the dizzy leap,
 Betrayed by Alta's cruel kisses.

From Billow to Brook.

THESE limpid and laughing waters
Run gushing and gurgling in glee,
Making music as sweet as the daughters
Of Nereus e'er sang to the Sea:—
Yea! sweeter and softer; they bring us
No echoes of tempests and tears;
The songs of our childhood they sing us;
Refrains from the best of life's years.

Here under the shade of these willows
That bend their light branches across,
There is never the thunder of billows
To tell us of shipwreck and loss;
No depths that shall whelm us far under,
No pitiless surges that rise,
Mid the darkness and echoing thunder,
With their stormy crests threatening the
skies.

No treacherous tides to deceive us
With the counterfeit semblance of rest,
Like false lips that but lure us to grieve us
With hopes that are barren at best.

Here sweet sing the birdlings above us,
 Fair foliage weaves sunshine with shade;
 If ripples allure—they but love us,
 And whisper it shyly—afraid:

 Afraid as a maid that doth hearken
 With blushes to love first confessed,
 Yet—if shadows discreetly should darken—
 Would clasp thy fond heart to her breast.
 O! this is the brooklet that bubbles
 And yearns for the touch of thy limbs;
 A Nymph who will soothe all thy troubles
 As she yields to thy wishes or whim

 Plunge in! and the ripples around thee
 Will circle and dance in their glee,
 And bubble with bliss that they've found thee
 And rescued thy Soul from the Sea:
 From the Sea—with its tempests and terrors—
 From the Sea with its death and despair:—
 Confess to the Nymph all thy errors,—
 Thy wooing of Mermaids, whose hair
 Streamed like sunbeams above the white beaches
 Fringed with foam fair as bosoms con-
 fessed;
 She will listen, and tenderness teaches
 The penitence Beauty loves best.

36 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Around thee her crystal tide gushes,
 Above thee her leafy boughs bend;
She crowns thee with lilies and rushes,
 And welcomes a *lover* and *friend*.

The Mermaids are fickle and faithless,
 They lure thee with laughter and song,
But he that believes them, *not scatheless*
 Shall he trust to their tenderness long!
O! Nymph of the Brooklet receive me
 In thy grot where ripples whisper in glee;
Thou would'st never first lure and then leave me
 As I have been left—by the Sea.

I have left far behind me the billows
 In search of the brooklets that run,
Fringed with feathering foliage of willows,
 Half hidden away from the sun.
The Sea's treacherous Siren betrayed me,
 Wrecked my shallop where fierce surges
 toss,
But the Nymph of the Brooklet shall aid me
 In her arms to forget the old loss.

The Snowdrop Maidens!

THE Snowdrop Maidens dance to-day
Where shadows are glooming and skies are
gray;

When woods are leafless and fields are brown
The Snow-Maid weareth her whitest gown;
In her streaming tresses—by wild winds
tossed—

Like stars of silver gleam flowers of frost.

When you meet these white Maids of Astolat
Put on your muffler and pull down your hat;
But these lily ladies who'd care to woo,—
With their pallid cheeks and their noses blue?
Not a nice time—but an ice time—this;
Less charm than chill—in a Snow-Maid's kiss.

Ay, chilly the charms of the Snowdrop Maid;
She shivers in sunlight and loves the shade;
On her pallid cheeks no roses bloom,—
The Home she haunts is a House of Gloom:—
On the craggy peaks where the clouds hang low,
She dances but faster when the ice-winds blow.

See up yonder, through the shadows grim

Where the fir-capp'd summits loom dark and
dim;

Under a sky where no sunbeam sifts,
Over the snow as it deepening drifts,
Lo!—come the Snowdrop Maidens all,
Dancing down at the White Wind's call.

Under the boughs of a leafless tree, [me;
See!—the Snowdrop Maidens are beckoning
Down in the glens where the dumb brooks bide,
Coily and coolly the white witches hide;
High above—where the white crests show,
Dance the lily ladies in robes of snow.

Fair may the Snowdrop Maidens be,
But your lily-white ladies too cool for me;
Better than shadows and sunless gloom
The gardens gay where the rosebuds bloom;
These Wintry Witches,—where the clouds hang
gray,

Are weaving shrouds for the world to-day!

But in a furled bud closely pent—
(Sweet prophecies by the glad Gods sent—)
Where the dusky mountain laurel grows,—
Lurks a tender blush under veiling snows;
Shyly hidden, as is Love's way,
Sleeping—not dead—the sweet soul of MAY!

The Songs that Need no Words.

BEDDED on ferns and moss I lie,
Through the leaves above me a glimpse of sky
Blue as the gentians in yonder nook
Where boughs bend over the brawling brook.

Behold the beauties I laud and love,
Ferns golden under, green leaves above,
And through this vista far—far—away
Clouds capping the billows of blue to-day.

And never a sound in the woodlands wake
Save the whisperings soft that the breezes
 make;
The brooklet's murmur,—the chirp of birds,
And these are the songs that need no words.

The sigh of the winds, the chant of the seas,
The fragrance of flowers, the verdure of trees,
The blue of the skies, the glow of the sun,
I love them always and every one.

Nearer to Nature let me stand,
Heart to heart, and hand in hand,
Like friend and lover—merged both in one
From season to season, from sun to sun.

Not married and harried as some folks are,
Not severed and sundered, as star from star,
But close and clinging as doth the Rose
When its hundred separate petals close,

One—yet many, about the core
Of the honeyed bliss Love keeps in store,
Hiving happiness from May to May
Lest the garnered sweets should fail some day;

Drinking deeply into glad lives,
The harvests sweet of a thousand hives,
So that no famine, when blooms are shed,
Could starve blind souls and leave Love dead.

The babbling of brooks, the breath of the breeze,
The murmur of pines and the sounding of seas,
The fluttering of wings, and the fluting of birds,
Ah! these are the Songs that need no Words!

The Oracles of May.

E'ER Pan his syrinx sets in tune
To pipe the lays of jovial June,
Comes that fair season May begets,—
The gladsome Month of Violets.

Fancy—more fickle—is April's own,
But loyal Love we now enthrone,
And with sweet blossoms crown him King
Of this last—loveliest Month of Spring.

These flowery oracles—though mute—
To Faith still prophesy of Fruit,—
To sate the lips of those content
To wait on helpings heaven-sent.

So, too, the unlearned lips that felt
To-day Hope's earliest kisses melt
Upon them timidly, in days to come
You'll find less diffident and dumb.

42 . Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

The Heart in May that opens first,—
A cradled blossom—coyly nursed,—
Shall ripen into radiance soon
Beneath the warmer skies of June.

And ere the miracle is told
Of brave September's garnered Gold,
Love, too, although he never farms,
Shall hold Hope's harvest in his arms.

The Autumnal Harlequin.

(Fall in the Over-hills of Otteray.)

THE leafage daily grows more thin,
Winds scatter wide the woodland's gold
That any pauper's hand may hold;—
Fair gifts the latest comers win.
Ah! when October's days slip in—
I half forget I'm growing old;
Again Love's litanies are told,—
Lost chances seem the only sin.
Here come my Dryads disarray'd,
Disheveled as some ravished maid,
Blushing, but ready to begin
A giddy dance—unzoned—unstayed—
With that Last Love—a “Reveler Strayed,”—
In happy fields:—Fall's Harlequin.

Ah! the Autumn is the season
That I always love the best;
It is good for song and jest:—
To be sour seems a treason

To the month when grapes are pressed.
And a bachelor may seize on
Any day—a special reason
When his sins shall be confessed ;—
Not to any shaven priest—
But some maiden, who at least
Loves some sinner.
Make the Sacrament a Feast ;
Buss the Beauty, ban the Beast,—
And you'll win her !

In the merry month—October—
Let our revelries begin :—
See!—the Satyrs all a-grin,
And the woodlands none too sober.
Naked Nymphs are chatting gaily
By the fountains as they flow,
And the Dryads laughing show
Their limbs more clearly daily.
Every day she smiles less shyly,—
Glances every day more slyly—
Does this darling—we would win :—
Leaf by leaf we'll softly strip her,
Not a shift left—nor a slipper—
When she hugs bold Harlequin.

A Cold Snap.

THE purpling trees danced to a breeze
That was not cold—but cooling;
The grass was green—a springlike scene—
Though March—not May—was ruling.
The Southern Sun his best had done
To warm the winds and dust 'em;
The Oaks—tho' tough—were green enough,
In spite of March, to trust 'em.

On every side with daisies pied
And dandelions glittering,—
The fields were gay, blue skies to-day,
Bland airs and birds all twittering:
But bide a bit, the end of it
Perhaps you'll see to-morrow;—
The “greenest” trees suspect a “freeze,”—
Flowers hang their heads in sorrow.

The “mercury” drops and blights the crops;
Despite old scars and schooling,
We trust Jack Frost, and to our cost

46 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Learn he was "April Fooling";—
'Tis thus with Love, who—hand and glove—
With Truth affects to travel;
Through all our schemes he weaves bright
 dreams
He swears will ne'er unravel.

But bide a bit—the end of it;
The Winter's not yet over,
And butterflies who trust his lies—
Will hardly—"live in clover";
The maid that erst your fancies nursed,
And gave you ready schooling,
Grown curt and cold, begins to scold:—
Her warmth was—"April Fooling"!

Grass of Parnassus.*(Parnassia.)*

O! PALLID white stars of September,
Peeping out of the dusk of the glades
Where Lobelias, that burn like an ember,
Fleck with scarlet the flickering shades
Of the woodland; there—down in the hollows,
Half hidden by feathering ferns,
The Grass of Parnassus close follows
Green banks of the brooklets and burns.

When in mizzling and misty October
The frosts are gladdened with gold,
E'er the later days sadden and sober
With russet-tints—cheerless and cold—
The chestnuts and oak; in close covers,
Near the ripples roofed over with vines,
Coily hidden away from her lovers,
Parnassia's Star twinkles and shines.

What blossom more dainty than this is,
With its petals of pearl veined with green?

48 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

It hides from the sun's burning kisses,
Like a star through the cloud-drifts half seen
In the twilight ;—a star that shall guide us
Away from the Cities of Sin
To the bowery byways that hide us
From the world with its dust and its din.

O brothers! These white stars that glimmer
Like a milky-way fringing the brooks,
That under the green and gold shimmer,
Can teach us far more than the books
Of priests or professors ;—come listen
To the lore that I learn from their leaves ;
These blooms, that like tender eyes glisten,
Have their tales to tell, too, like the Sheaves :

But a tale not of travail and labor,
Not of harvests half-choked with the tares,
Not of strife between neighbor and neighbor,
Not of sordid and narrowing cares
That our lives with grim shadows environ ;
But prophesies glad from Above ;
Brooks sing sweeter songs than a Siren ;
Blossoms teach us contentment and love.

Keep thy " laurels," O Peak of Parnassu
For sad brows that are furrowed by frowns ;

Though Fame and her Lackeys should pass us,
And rate us too rustic for crowns,
Whether golden or gilded;—what matters
The sneers of a world where Hates hiss?
See! Autumn her golden gifts scatters,
And Love finds a blossom—like this:

A blossom, if only the “grasses”
That garland the Fountains we seek,
Suits better our loves and our lassies
Than the “laurels” that darken thy Peak.
Let thy Lords and thy Laureats scramble,—
Excelsior!—still their device;—
Below—far more safely I ramble,
Nor envy your *honors on ice*.

Thy Peaks, with their grandeurs and glories,
Are barren and rocky and cold;
I read brighter hopes—sweeter stories—
In the leaves of these blossoms that hold
In their hearts Heaven’s uttermost meanings,
Written down in just that sort of text
That a lover who wastes no glad gleanings,
Would learn from lips shyly perplexed.

There’s a time for the sowing and reaping
Of the harvests Plenty pours from her horns;

50 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

There's a time for sad watching and weeping,—
For the gathering of Thistles and Thorns
That follow the Furrow; but Heaven,
In nooks we can find if we will,
Keeps Love,—Beauty and Hope as a leaven,—
Sweet glimpses of Paradise still.

O! Grass of Parnassus star'd whitely
With petals in whose veins are seen
(Though the frosts of September fall lightly)
The tints of fair April's glad green
Faintly penciled;—how often thy flowers
Through the russets and browns—sad and sere,
Have recalled the spring's sunniest hours,
And revived with thy sweets the Old Year!

The Goldenrod gilds the wide fallows
With the glint and the gleam of its spears,
And down by the brook's pebbly shallows—
Half hidden—the Gentian appears
Tip'd with Heaven's own blue; and gay asters
Scatter widely their disks rayed and fringed,
And here and there "Rattlesnake Masters,"
With their clustering cups orange tinged,
Or fairer than frost-work; and stately
Liatris, with her sceptre aglow,

Rises regally purple where lately
We found the Anemone's snow;
And the maples burn bright in the hollows,
And the chestnuts turn gold on the hills,
Though the Year hath forgotten Spring's swallows,
And frosts soon shall fetter the rills.

Yet the woods have tongues ready to whisper
The secrets that Eden-Land held,
And the winds, blowing crisper and crisper,
Bring, like echoes, the stories of Eld;
Ah! come to these shady recesses
Where Parnassia's stars fitfully shine,
And they'll whisper you all the soul's guesses
Of the land and the lore that's divine.

Here are Oracles deeper than Delphis,
Yet ready, if studied aright,
(For blooms Fairy tongues have and Elf eyes)
To uncurtain the shadows of Night,
And show us beyond the Dark Portals,
Whose lintels seem Death and Despair,
The Hope and the Home of Immortals
In Edens surpassingly fair.

Witch Hazel!

(*Hamamelis Virginica.*)

By bickering brooks that babbling run
From summits dim to valleys dun,
Half-hidden from November's sun
By Leucothoë's tresses green,
There with bleak winter half begun,
Witch Hazel's amber buds are seen.

A dream of April midst the grays
That gather round these Autumn days,
When skies the bluest blur'd with haze,
And winds of morn come sharp and crisp;
Bent o'er the brooklet where it strays
With lilt of rapids or ripples' lisp.

Pale flowering of softest hue,
As when across the Bending Blue,
The slumberous shadows are shot through
By sunbeams sifted doubly fine—
From skies that sharpest frosts bestrew
With clouds that seem to half divine
The storms that Winter days shall bre'

No blaze of blossoms here unfold,
But faintest fire of frosted gold
On purpling stems that hardly hold
One leaf unfingered by the frost;
No tale of Spring-time here is told:
Witch Hazel buds when blooms are lost.

When suns shine full and winds blow fair
Luck laughs and Love seems debonair,
Hope conquers Doubt—and Faith Despair,
And friends are thick as blooms in Spring:
These joys have all been ours to share
When buds were ripe and birds would sing.

Now Summer's melting mood is past
September's harvests ripened fast,
And then October's gold at last
That rusts to Autumn's russet gray;
The winds are bleak—skies over cast,
And cheerless Winter chides to-day.

Yet now amid the woodlands gaunt
That mournful memories ever haunt,
Though the wild North-winds fiercely chaunt
War-songs and wails of sunless Seas;
Like some true friend—no fears can daunt,
Amid the glooms of leafless trees;

54 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Fair as some sunbeam soft that slips
Its sheath of cloud in storm's eclipse:
Witch Hazel, where the brooklet trips,
Foretells in flowers of pale gold,
That though Death seals Love's flowering lips.
New Springs shall follow on the old.

The Trailing Arbutus!

(*Epigæa repens.*)

It looks so innocent and shy, a timid blushing
thing,

As though it feared to face the sky or hearken
to the Spring;

The Spring, that with her dancing feet and rust-
ling robes that play

About her shoulders,—comes to greet the Dawn-
ing of Love's Day:

Love's Holiday, that April first brought veiled
in shifting showers,

That ends e'er July's fiery thirst hath parched
June's drooping flowers.

Of all the early buds that wake to welcome
April's birth,

What daintier blossom could I take in all this
glad green earth?

None fairer; see these clustering gems of
dainty white and pink,

56 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Half hidden by brown moss and stems upon the
 gray crag's brink;
Arbutus, with her small pink ears laid close to
 Earth's brown breast,
The Spring's first whispered coming hears, and
 tells it to the rest.

Whilst still the rude winds roughly pass, and
 March ends bleak and chill,
She hears the pulsing of the grass,—and feels
 the old roots thrill;
E'er fickle April, weeping erst, begins anon to
 smile,
Arbutus buds have told us first with blooms
 that ne'er beguile.

Even though the feathery snow-flakes fell,—the
 Dawns gray robed in gloom,
We know at last that Winter's spell is broken by
 one bloom;
This rosy prophet of the Spring, cradled in leaf-
 less bowers,
Heralds the coming of the **King** who wears a
 crown of Flowers.

To a Humming-Bird.

FROM what far Isles of Antilles,—
Across the blue and billowy seas
Have those wings—whirring—borne thee hence,
From land of palms to land of pines;—
Where even the noonday's sunlight shines
In August with a coy pretense
Of April airiness,—a hint
That summer's noon unrisen yet?—

Or may be, that frail frosts shall fret
Ere long the flowers that gleam and glint—
To match the jewels of thy throat,—
The gems that sparkle in thy crest.
Where yonder blossoms blaze their best,
A feathered rainbow seems to float
On winglets poised, that in a whirl
Against the leafage,—seem a blur,—
A gossamer shot through with gold:
With beak—(a Fairy's dagger this)—
That dips into the honeyed bliss
Of every bloom the dawns unfold.

58 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

O! birdling, when the bleak days come,
And every lingering blossom grieves,
Autumn's gold rustling in the leaves,—
Brown thrushes in the thickets dumb:
Canst thou not guide me, flight by flight,
Athwart the leagues that lie between,
To that fair Land, where Summer's sheen
Girdles the months that know no blight.

A Sylvian Symphony !

THIS leafy forest is a world
Quite wide enough to house my heart ;
And in this fragrant flower furled
I find sweet salves to soothe Love's smart.
A Dryad is my lady-love
In leafy bowers biding ;
Soft coos above the purple dove
Where winds are softly chiding
The pines, that mid the leafy leas
Still murmuring mourn for long lost Seas.

In this hand's-breadth of mottled moss
There's room enough for Love and Loss ;
And every blossom's wind-kissed bell
To fond hearts Love's sweet stories tell.
In these soft silences, where delves
The chipmunk, there are lurking elves ;
Brownies, in curious caps and cowls,
As wonderfully wise as owls ;
When the moon silvers sylvan bowers
Fays slip from all the nodding flowers ;

And near the fountain's pebbly brink
The Pinkies dance in white and pink;—
And Gnomes and Kobolds, Nixies fair,
And Pixies,—fluttering everywhere.
When owls are out, and bull-frogs croak,
The woodlands teem with Fairy folk!

But when the Dawn is breaking
The Fairy-folk fly quaking
To shadowy glens and bowers,
And hide in caves and flowers.
Fair Nymphs through glen and grove
In laughing legions rove;
The birds new flights are winging,
And greet Love with their singing:
Yet still the woodlands, up or under,
Are full of witcheries and wonder.

See! There's a tyrant spider
Weaving nets for flippan't flies,
And standing right beside her,
Brother Bumble packs his thighs
With the pilfered sweets of flowers
From a hundred different bowers;
Fond filchings in fair weather
From hare-bell and from heather.

And here a-tip-toe tripping,
With soft star-light in her eyes,
I find a Naiad slipping
Into depths where daylight dies;
And I kiss the rosy nipples
That the snowy bosoms show:
Then we dive beneath the ripples,
But the rest—you needn't know!

FLORIDA FANCIES.

Winter Wooings!

(IN THE "SUNNY SOUTH.")

I AM Winter, but my smile is so cheering
You might almost mistake me for Spring;
My blossoms are pushing and peering
When the swallows of summer take wing.

Though I threaten the blooms of November,
I am cowed by the thorns of—one Rose,
And there are some eyes I remember
That could melt in a moment my snows.

Though I follow the steps of the mower
Still rich are the harvests I glean;
Long e'er Love hears the Song of the Sower,
My frosts are all brodered with green.

When the Violets of March are fast fading
My Jessamines and Roses appear,
For Flora with blossoms is braiding
The cincture that girdles the year.

May marries December despite me,
And I show "the cold shoulder" in vain;
The earliest buds safely slight me,
And my frosts even Lilies disdain.

I am born with the Moon in the crescent,
I die with the Moon in the wane;
For my snows are as evanescent
As the glories of April's reign.

Water Bewitched !

GREEN glooms are the orange groves yonder
In whose dusk shine stars fragrant and fair;
My fancies no further would wander
Than these shores where the mid-winters wear
Half the tints of the summers that faded
To gold when November grew sere;
Even March with sweet blossoms is braided,
And April sheds never a tear.

Not yet show our "laurels" the luster—
That rivals the lily's white gleam,—
But May cometh soon; you may trust her
To ripen the buds that still dream,—
Only dream of the days that are burning
With blossoms still hushed into sleep:
But March ends and with April's returning—
The South wind breathes over the deep.

The Loltees and Lurlines that cower'd
In gray grottoes deep under the waves,
Now, knowing the Jessamines have flowered,

Catch glimpses far down in their caves
Of the Sun's golden showers—that stipple
Their dusk with a freckling of stars,
And they hark to the lilt of the ripple
That breaks into song on the bars

Of silvery sands, close embracing
The bluest of heavens, that tell
Every blossom and bower enlacing
The green-girdled shores of Estelle.*

Beneath the wide fans of Palmettoes
Let us dream in the shadows that woo;
The Yucca unsheathes his stilettoes
To guard us from Hates that pursue.

Shut out the bleak North with its wailing
Of tempest,—its turmoil and tears;
Spread our sails to soft-winds, we are sailing
With Love,—Hope the pilot who steers;
And Heaven perhaps is the Haven,
If not—there are Edens below,
Though the soul that's too cautious and craven
May miss the gifts Godheads bestow.

* Lake Estelle is between Winter Park and Orlando, Fla. ; two well-known winter-resorts in De Leon's Land.

66 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

See! there in the deep as it darkles
Bluer skies than the heavens above,
Far under the firmament sparkles;
Plunge in, win some Loltee—and love!
What is Death but the end of our dreamings?
What is Night but the gateway of Days
That bring us, not Life's sordid schemings,
But the Deed that no doubting delays.

Here we grope in a gray world of visions,
Loves and hopes that but flower to fade;
But there are the homes of Elysians,
And Doubt and Despair stand dismayed.
Green-girdled thy shores that surround me,
Lake Estelle, with palmetto and pine;
Here no frail faded phantoms have found me,
But—fair Loltees and Lurlines divine.

Magnolias gleam darkly above me,—
But her “laurels” I leave to Estelle;
Not Glory—but the Graces shall love me
If I woo not too wisely—but well.
See! down in the clear depths—far under—
There open blue heavens of bliss!
If I plunged—would my saddened soul sunder
From dreams of a lost world like this?

The Cherokee Rose !

THE peach trees blush, the pear trees blanch,
Foliage or flower on every branch
And bough to-day ;
Soft blows the wind, bright shines the sun,
Spring's sweet beguilements have begun,
And yet 'tis March—not May.

Not under leafed lids shyly hide
The violets—purple, white and pied,
But airing all
Their graces in the fields still sere ;
These and the bluets first appear,
When mock-birds call.

As yet, where over sandy shallows
The rivulets run, but dark-stemmed salallows
Show laceries faint
Of misty greens, and dark lagoons,—
That mock the live-oaks' gray festoons,
Red maples paint.

**Rosa Sinica*, or *levigata*, of some botanists, in Southern Florida flowers end of January.

The thrifty elm shows warmer tints,
Embowered beeches give us hints
Of Summer's green,
And where the rustic roadways ramble,
Mid purpling leaves white buds of bramble
Like stars are seen.

But last and loveliest of the gifts
March brings us from December's drifts
Of melting snows,
White wings of butterflies set round
A bronzed star with a golden ground,—
A wide-eyed Rose.

Long sprays of leafage green and glossed,
Like locks of laughing Dryads tossed
To lure the Spring;
In all the world no rose for me
To match this Rose of Cherokee
The March days bring.

To Alma in April!

LET Winter winnow from his snows
The gifts that gild this world of ours,
And every wooing wind that blows
Waft hitherwards from tropic bowers
Exotic luxuries that bring
Fulfillment of an endless Spring.

The biting frosts of Winter nerve
The heplful hands that wrest a guerdon
From Fate, and stalwart hearts best serve
To bravely bear life's heavy burden:
But, longing for less scanty alms,
The Norseman came from pines to palms.

Here, where the frosts and flowers met,
Lock hands, the lusty Year embracing;
Here, where the violets half forget
Their shyness, sunbeams interlacing
Red rose with snowdrops wintry-white;
Here let Love rest him from his flight.

Here, where the "Frost flowers" fall and fade,
Kissed by a sun too warmly beaming;
Here, where the roses unafraid
In ides of March of Mays are dreaming;
Here, under fretted palm-leaves, Hope
Should draw Love's happiest horoscope.

Not all the Summer's juiciest fruits
Can sweeter prove than April's bowers;
See, how the lissome tendril shoots,
Its brown arms cradling baby flowers,
That soon shall burgeon out and bud
As fair as May-day's maidenhood.

Not all the Autumn's golden sheaves
Can match the Jessamine's gems of amk
And all about our cottage eaves
Glycene's purpling clusters clamber
In regal robes arrayed, that bring
Rich fancies of some Flower King.

What is so sweet,—nay, half so sweet,
As buds by birdlings serenaded?
The flowers, fondly, kiss our feet,
And over us the trees have shaded
Our woodland walks with curtains green,
Looped up with festooned vines between.

Yet there is one thing sweeter far
Than songs of birds or flowers the fairest:
To this sad World from some glad Star,
(Of all things spiritual the rarest!)
On wings immaculate there came
A Soul estatic, wrapp'd in flame.

It sought some fitting niche wherein
It still might dream of that far Heaven,
Some casket rusted by no sin,—
Some gracious form with life for leaven,
And found no daintier shrine than this
Sweet body that my lips now kiss.

As Summer's pulses stir the bud
That quickens with the sweet prevision,
So mixed this spirit with thy blood,
Transfusing thee with powers Elysian;
And all thy charms of form and face
From this new gift gained added grace.

A coronet of Jessamine gold
Shall add its treasures to thy tresses,
And robes as rich in tints untold
As royal Glycene's, shall fold
Thy lissome limbs, whose pallor shows
The fairer for thy cheeks of rose.

Let April bring her brightest bud,
Not all her gifts can match thy graces;-
Thou art the flower of Womanhood,
And where Love's soul the symbol traces,
Thy memory blooms, and ever brings
The sunshine of eternal Springs!

The Naughty Nixie !

(Lake Estelle.)

IN the lakelet's depths—that no ripples dim,
In the silence soft, where the finn'd-folk swim;
Under the floating flowers that swing
To the softest airs that the breezes bring;
There in the noonday dusk of the deep,
Where even the golden sunbeams sleep;
Couched on a bed of golden sands,
My Witch of the Waves—with waving hands—
Beckons me down to that world below,
Where Death is a dream that the Gods forego.

Oh, you naughty Nixie, do you wish
To bait your line with love, and fish
For a “gudgeon”—not green, but as wrinkled
and gray
As the bald-headed Bard who peers to-day
Down in these depths, where he catches gleams
Through the clare-obscure — of his faded
dreams?
Who hears, like the chimes of bells long rung,

74 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

The echoes of songs dead lips have sung?
Who sees in the Heavens glassed below
The skies that have darkened so long ago?
Who knows that the lures that you weave to-day
Are the same old tricks (that the girls grown
 gray)
Once played in the days that are dead as the
 wraith
Of defrauded Friendships and murdered
 Faith?

Nay! naughty Nixie, your lures are lost,
For my fires have long since turned to frost;—
In the waters beneath, or the Earth above,
I have found but the pangs—not the pleasures—
 of Love:

No Lorely of the witching waves
Can lure me down to her sunless caves;—
Nay, the rosiest maid with her ripest kiss
Can never waken Hope's buried bliss!

The Heavens Below.

(Lake Estelle.)

WHERE ripples glimmer and wavelets gleam,
The lakelet dazzles the shadows dim
Under the pines on its marshy rim;—
And I sit, by the silent shores and dream
Of a summit far with its sunlit crest,
Rising high o'er the vales below
Where brooklets babble and blossoms blow;
But the waters and waves are best!
Fairest of all when the winds forget
The roses to fan and the ripples to fret,
And I gaze in the depths with wonder;
For above,—if the skies are blue and bland,
Down there are the fields of Fairyland,—
And the Heavens are opening under!

The Romance of the Roses!

WHITE roses on her breast,
Tea-roses in her hair,
Red roses softly rest
On her cheeks blushing, where
Kisses I press so oft
Though she cries shyly—Hush!
Whispering low and soft
Lest that white rose should blush.—
As it would,— should it discover,
That this lady had a lover!

White roses—pale as pearl
Pressed to her beating heart,
Ruddy rose that unfurls
When her glad lips impart
Secrets I would not tell,—
Whispers I would not share
Even with buds that fell
Tossed from her golden hair;
Lest these blossoms might betray us,
Or with vengeful thorns delay us.

Tea-roses in her hair,
 White roses on her breast,
 Are they not whispering there
 Secrets that Love confessed?
 Yet when those lips I press
 Blushing—she bids me go,
 Lest that fair rose should guess
 Half the things lovers know;
 And my burning vows she hushes
 Lest these blooms should read her blushes.

Red roses—ripe and rich,
 Matched with the lips I press,
 Dainty tea-roses, which
 Fettered by some fair tress,
 Falling in golden strands
 Down on her bosom's snow,
 Where some bold lover's hands
 Finds where white roses blow:—
 Then behold, Love's lesson learning,
 Every blossom crimson turning.

Beau Butterfly!

LIKE a butterfly I flutter round the blossoms
 on life's path,
And the sweetest words I utter, just to still dear
 Rose's wrath,
After having often flirted with the dainty
 Violet:—
 Trust me, she's a true Coquette!

When you find a flower, or fair one, loving
 shade and all too shy,
These are just the sort to snare one, if you've
 never learned to fly.
All the Graces of the Garden I have tested, none
 are sure,
 But most dangerous the—demure.

Sometimes, it is true, I blindly miss the Rose
 and mate the Thorn,
But fair Lily laps me kindly, and consoles for
 Rose's scorn;
Spite of wishes and of wooing e'en Forget-me-
 nots forget,
 But red Tulips chide regret.

Beau Butterfly. 79

Let others wear the willow, or weeds of sorrow
show;

On April blooms I pillow my wings that gleam
and glow,

And through the sunlit summer—Lily, Rose
and Violet

Teach me to—flirt and to—forget.

In a flurry and a flutter—each bloom captured
by surprise;

Sweet lips can only stutter when we answer with
our—eyes:

Let the roses faint to lilies,—and the lilies
blush and burn,

As I woo them each in turn.

Like a butterfly I follow the footsteps of the
Spring,

I emulate the swallow despite his width of
wing;

Through the glad and golden hours, with Lily,
Rose and Violet,

I flirt, and no frowns make me fret.

So in the sunshine basking, I welcome all who
woo;

80 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Take kisses for the asking, from red and white
and blue:

Why should they call me giddy because I laugh
at nets?

I earn my dews, and dodge all debts.

Perhaps I'm somewhat fickle, that is—I, do
not care

To get into a pickle by trusting to Love's snare;
With all the world in blossom, whilst some I
seek and others shun,

I'll not wait long to win me one.

Though Violet, Rose and Lily should all rebuff
me now,

I should be surely silly to weep for that,—I
trow;

The Graces of the Garden are not so hard to
find,—

And—change their mind.

Like a butterfly I flutter round the flowers fresh
and fair,

And the sweetest words I utter when their
honeyed stores I share;

If the Roses prove too fiery, there are Lilies,
Heaven knows!

That might cool me with their snows.

If to-day come gloomy showers and my beauties
grow discreet,

Then to-morrow's brighter hours shall make
Hope seem doubly sweet,

Doubly sweet and doubly willing thus to make
at once amends

To the ficklest of—friends.

With a Fan to Fickle Fanny!

WHAT gift were best to give you, dear,
Fit too to keep as token
Of all the coquetries that lure
The hearts that you have broken?
What thing like you—both frail and fair—
Unsteady, light and airy
As some sly Nixie—swift to snare,
Or flippant, frisky Fairy?

At times you're soft as eider down
Wherein young Cupids nestle,
At times you're cold as when skies frown
And flakes with flowers wrestle;
So fair and fickle, cool or kind,
Nay! sometimes both together;
So quick you change your mood or mind
'Tis hard to say, sweet, whether

Hope's eager hand shall grasp the Rose
Or gather thorns that rankle;
Yet those your eyes leave free, Heaven knows,

Could ne'er resist your ankle:
Inspired, however, by Naughty Nick,
Sometimes with vengeful vigor,
Mark how the little filly "kicks,"
And Romeo treats with rigor.

This Fan, the scepter of a Blonde—
Whose finger wears no thimble,
I give you, it is frail—not fond—
Hence 'tis a fitting symbol;
With this between us you can make
A "coolness" when you like it,
Or fan a dying "flame," or break—
A heart if you should strike it.

'Twill hide your blushes (if you blush)
Though scant the space it covers;
'Twill screen in turn the gas and gush
Of all your legion lovers;
With it, sweet, give yourself such airs
As suit your fragile graces;
Behind it you may lay your snares
In unexpected places.

Sheltered behind this fan you fill
With yawns—"gaps" conversational,
And safely take your naps at will

84 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

When Romeos grow too rational;
Screened by its folds you'll dig your pits,
And mask them with those flowers
Whose subtle fragrance turns the wits
Of all who haunt your bowers.

And if you wish a tête-à-tête—
A fan proves safe and supple,
A wall that only gives .. gate
To—just take in—a couple;
But spread its facile folds and lo!
How many can it shelter?
Lothario seeing breasts of snow
Believes his fires can melt her.

You fancy that the lady's won
Because she still is single;
With you 'tis "feeling"—with her—"fun"—
To make your heart-strings tingle:
Whoso would melt the living snows
That guard her bosom's Aiden,
Must be a Cræsus, Heaven knows,
And bribe with bonds this Maiden.

She never feels—though sometimes felt,
She'll never love—though lures you
With kisses warm enough to melt,

Until she once secures you;—
But won,—a convert to her charms,—
Your heart as hostage taken,—
You'll find cold welcome in her arms:
First fooled, and then forsaken.

A Fan? Yes, that's the gift most fit
For such a fickle beauty;
She's neither wealth—nor worth—nor wit—
Nor faintest sense of duty;
And yet she snares the wisest man,
With flimsy favors fools him:
'Tis pity, that unlike a fan—
She somehow—never cools him!

Virtue Unrewarded !

(To Aline.)

IN April she adored me,
A lass of fourteen springs ;
Indeed she rather bored me,—
Her charms seemed childish things.

I might have taken kisses—
A dozen every day,
But held such unripe blisses
Too tame for even play.

Then were it not misleading
The maid, at least in part ?
There's risk you see in reading
The secrets of a—heart.

And so I would not follow
The clues she often gave ;
My heart not hard or hollow,
But still—I was no knave.

My conscience would have teased me
Had half her lures been mine;
Yet still her sweetness pleased me,
Though I was—forty-nine.

Another April flowers,
The maid is just sixteen;
She feels her ripening powers,
Knows now what love may mean.

And I,—an old friend truly,—
What favors now are mine?
My hopes have grown unduly,
And she has—grown divine.

“ Two years ago, believe me,
From kisses I abstained;
And now you should not leave me
Without fair interest gained :

“ Remember all those kisses
I might have taken once! ”
*If so, the Houri hisses,
You must have been a—dunce! ,*

Fickle Fifteen.

(To Aline.)

God help the lover in love with a lass
Of only fifteen years,
For she loves less a man—than males in the
mass,
And the lonely “One”—left in arrears.

She’s not “emotional,” not a bit,
Nor fickle, but fond of—“all”;
Yet “notional,” that’s the worst of it,
And will come at a coxcomb’s call.

Every few weeks her passions bud
To a flower, but hardly a flame,
And the shallowest heart best understood,
For she likes her tempter—tame.

Least of all shall you earnest be,
Least of all must you—love,
For her favorite tippie is “baby-tea,”
And with Folly—she’s “hand and glove.”

To-day she will lure you if she can,
Tender—yet never true;
To-morrow she's ogling some other man,
And has quite forgotten you.

Her heart is never an empty niche,
Though her soul still a vacant shrine;—
So woo, if you choose, the little witch.
For she never could be mine.

To a Juvenile Juliette !

(To Katie McR.)

Don't be in such an awful haste
To find a lucky lover ;
Enough of fools for every taste
As later you'll discover ;—
So husband your resources now,
Just wait a while, don't worry :
Until you're twenty anyhow
There's no great need for hurry.

If every Gill can find a Jack,
And every goose a gander,
You needn't follow Cupid's track
To look up your Leander :
Even if you cannot " make heads swim "
As Heroines might—or " Hero,"
Don't howl because the chance looks slim
And all your hopes at zero.

You've still some five or six good years
For fishing, if your hooks are

Kept baited ; and remember tears
Are apt to hurt, when looks are
The lures that best may help you catch
Some Romeo to console you ;
But watch lest spite of lock and latch
The rogue should still cajole you.

Though aught that's naughty or that's nude
Your youthful tastes may tickle,
Save as a sort of interlude
For fancies frail and fickle,
You'll find that Love in Hymen's House
Is still the same old " Codger "
Who tries to picture a carouse
Out of one stale " corn-dodger."

But really, if you will not wait—
Say half a dozen summers,
Then fly to Folly, meet your Fate,
And welcome all newcomers :
Don't feel for one—or flirt with two,
But whilst Discretion slumbers,
Invoke that proverb (old but true)
That " Safety lies in Numbers ! "

Keep on the ever lengthening List
All sorts and all conditions,

For even one fool might be missed
When Passion thus petitions;
Set traps for all the missing men,
Young Dude or riper Dandy,—
And even a Bald-head now and then
Perhaps might come in handy.

Wrinkles Versus Roses.

(To Katie McR.)

COME, lassie, let your lips impart—
In softest silence—what your heart
Hath learned of True Love's lore;
It takes no weary years to tell
The weight and worth of Passion's spell,—
And "Fourteen's" wiser than "Fourscore."

Roses, not wrinkles, are the signs
That every tender heart divines,
Love's hieroglyphic riddle,
That aged eyes but dimly trace,
Whilst happier youth—with easy grace—
Soon learns by heart—that "fiddle"—

Whose chords are heart-strings; or the girls
Would grant this Orpheus their curls
To make the music better:—
But if these Dears—divinely fair—
You'd ever hope to safely snare—
Forge fast a—Golden Fetter.

Though Cupid every word should con
In Love's last—largest Lexicon,—
But little help his wits could glean
From Wisdom—with his wisest winks;—
Nor trust to what a graybeard thinks,
But let your guide be—"Sweet Sixteen."

And if you miss your Paradise,
Your heart must long have turned to ice,
Or palsied passions left you dry
Of all the stamina and pith
That you should need if dealing with
A "bonnie lassie"—not too shy.

Graybeard, beware lest you should fan
A flame to warm some luckier man,—
Some Youth less shy than shifty;—
For even lassies of SIXTEEN
Know that there's little left to glean
From the "bald spots" of—FIFTY!

GOLDEN-TIDE

The Sage of Sunny-Side.

THEY tell me I have wit enough
To grace the world of fashion,
Where all is in the "style"—not "stuff,"—
And pride the ruling passion;
I might "rub elbows" with the great,—
That is—the "Stars" and "Garters"
Of those, whom some most cruel fate
Makes into gilded martyrs.

If I would cut the country clowns,
And be some Dukeling's dummy,
With coronets—if not with crowns—
I might grow almost chummy;—
If I could but forget to blush,
And had more diamonds than deserts,
In famous coverts I might flush
Some faded fair who still are flirts.

Might dance attendance at some fête
Where dames, with sixteen quarterings,

Hold "Blood" alone can compensate
 For lack of many better things;
 Might even reach such heights as these,—
 To be some faded Beauty's beau;
 Yes, even win perchance a kiss
 From cheeks that faded long ago.

Nay! let your worldlings dance their jigs,
 Unraveling empty riddles;
 I envy not your proudest prigs,—
 Content with flowers and fiddles;
 Content with rustic loves and lanes,
 With merry jokes and julips,
 Like yonder bee, who gets his gains
 From clover—not gay tulips.

Loud clappers have your city bells,
 Of that there is no question,
 And endless feasts leave "swollen swells,"
 The curse of indigestion!
 If I have wit, I'll prove it best
 By shunning fools of fashion,
 And that cold world—where love's a jest,
 And pride of pelf life's passion!

Saint Sunny-Heart's Shrine.

IN the heart of fair Merry-Land once lived a
King,
Crowned with but roses spring after spring;
A reed was his scepter, his throne was of straw;
Mirth was his mandate,—and Love was his law:
Laughing and quaffing, kiss after kiss,
Where could you find better monarch than this?

Business was banished, Profit accursed,
Misery vanished:—Hunger and Thirst—
Envy and Hatred—Trouble and Tears;
These were but memories left of old years
That had wasted the land e'er gracious King
Hilary
Took our Saint Sunny-Heart out of the pillory.

Heavens! of old how the tricksters of Trade
Posed as our Noblemen;—titles all paid
Cash down and “patented”:—fools took the
hint,
Honor and power could come from the Mint;

98 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Even true holiness would Heaven refuse
To the sinners who sat in the silk-cushioned
 pews?

What was respectable? PRIDE and PRETENCE,
Backed by the wisdom of DOLLARS and CENTS.
If in good broadcloth scamps could disport,
Welcome they found at King "Moneybags' "
 Court;

But if poor Temperance danced in her rags,
Down came a legion of high titled hags,
Stripp'd to the waist, save scant loopings and
 lace,
And vowed that to show her bare shins was disgrace.

Fellows whose chief aims were profit and pay,
Molded and made from the commonest clay;—
Never fused by the fires that out of its dross
Shows at last in the furnace the glint and the
 gloss

Of the Vase that shall hold as a chalice divine
The gleam and the glow of the soul's sacred
 wine;

Not a "Nobility," say what you please,
But "Ig-nobility" surely were these.

Saint Sunny-Heart's Shrine. 99

But we buried "Aurelian," the old King of
gold;—

With scant prayer and less pity laid him under
the mold,

Where the worm eats his heart, and the rust eats
his crown;

And over his monument gibbers a clown
Ever laughing and quaffing, for though Death
may be Rest,

After all for the living the lively are best;
Your "Dead Lion" looks in an Epitaph well,
But bury him deep,—or the carcass will tell!

After "Aurelian" came "Hilary"—King,
And his are the stories and glories we sing;
If his Crown was not heavy, his Scepter was
light,

And his motto for Merry-Land:—"Roses are
Right!"

As God gave us flowers, and fragrance and
flame

Of the sunlight above and the fruits of the
same,

So the Mandate was—Mirth, and his Mission
was—Love,

For the Gods hide no hates in the Heavens
above.

100 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Let Love be thy guide, even Lust by the way
May toy with the blossoms Chance strews in his
way.

It is Hate and not Love, it is Lies and not Lust,
That trample the flame of the Soul in the dust.
Let our King be Hilarius; laughing he reigns,
Every bliss—every kiss—counted wisely as
gains:

If your jealous JEHOVAHS grudge Wit, Woman
and Wine,—

Instead let us worship at Saint Sunny-Heart's
Shrine!

Light-Heart Harry!

I'M a wanderer—on the wing, never sup with
Sorrow,

Drink to-day from roadside spring, sip good
wine to-morrow;

Never walk, but ride “Shank’s mare” like a
Knight benighted;

See, the goodly “arms” I bear, motto thus
indited:—

Light of heart and light of head,

Never mind what cares ahead,

Life to Love is plighted!

Never tavern found or town—that I ever stayed
in,

Where, without a single crown, couldn’t find a
maiden

And a master who would trust such a merry
fellow:

Never let the moments rust, maids might grow
too mellow:—

I may miss to-morrow’s chance,

102 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

But I'll have to-day my dance,
Be she green or yellow.

Temperate tippling's no disgrace, and I am no
bigot;
Mark me, master Boniface, never spare the
spigot;
Hostess, kill the "fatted calf," let no capon
caper;—
If I never pay the half,—just discount my
paper.
And the lassie in my lap
Knows 'twill be no great mishap)
If I should escape her.

If long ere to-morrow's sun sink on land and
ocean,
I should vanish, as he's done (sometimes take
the notion),
Leaving all my debts unpaid and the sweet lass
fretting,
Need not worry, little maid, fast you'll learn
forgetting:
Love we know's a game of chance;—
Whether dirge or whether dance,
Blindly goes the betting.

Boniface may hold as lost all the wine I wasted,
And mine hostess count the cost of the feast I
tasted;

But you need not weep, my lass, that your lad's
a rover,

Many a better one will pass e'er the day's half
over:

Cupidon in prison shut,
Or with pinions curtly cut,
Couldn't "live in clover."

Let the wicked worldlings damn all my fun and
frolic;

Airs and graces are a sham, conscience oft but
—colic;

I am light of heart and head,—but by no means
vicious;

Look upon the wine when red, think sweet lips
delicious:

But I live, let others live,

Can forget and can forgiv

Merry,—not malicious.

Thus with all my faults confessed, as no saint—
but sinner,

Still I welcome Love as guest, share with dogs
my dinner;

104 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Am no chafferer or churl, trust the Gods and
Graces;

Love the flowers that unfurl in life's hidden
places:

And whatever be my fate,

Mark me,—'midst the Rich and Great,

You'll find "harder cases."

A Lover of Good Things!

ABOU-BEN-ADAM (may his paunch increase
With long libations—feasts that never
cease!—)

One night awoke,—for surfeit sorrow brings,
And our friend had stuffed on divers things—
Dainty but indigestible: in the soft gloom
Of his delightful but dim-lighted room,
Behold a Demon, long-eared as an Ass,
Who scribbled scribe-like in a Book of Brass.

Unstinted punch had made Ben-Adam bold,
And so instead of cowering scared and cold,
He thus addressed the Ghost or Goblin:

Say old Fright,

Why wanderest thou around so restlessly at
night?

And what's the meaning of this awful scrawl?
Just "hump yourself," my long-eared friend,
and tell us all!

The Goblin growled, and with a grunt replied:
I'm writing up the list of those good men who
lived and died

106 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

In orthodoxy:—good—are only those
Who pay their tithes,—and kiss the Papal toes;
For it is writ:—“ Alone our Gospel saves ! ”—
The Orthodox die sainted—though they lived as
 knaves !

And is my name upon your list ?—The Goblin
 shook

His tonsured head:—Nay, not in our Book!—
At Heaven's door in vain the best man knocks,
Unless he's registered—as of the Orthodox.
There's but one God, one only God redeems
Even the veriest scamp, yet wrecks the guileless
 schemes

Of men more honest, but who still refuse
To worship our God,—Jehovah of the Jews.

Then cried Ben-Adam:—Though your God I've
 missed,

I pay no tithes, the Pope's toes never kissed,
And am content to be dissevered and dismissed
From all the frauds and fools I see upon your
 List;—

Just make this note,—before your Highness
 “ wings ”

Back to your "fireside":—That A. B. A. is
fond of all good things!

And he who's fond of "all good things" the
Godheads send

Hath still some right to claim the "God of
Good"—as—Friend.

To Silenus!

(A "GRACE" BEFORE "GRUB.")

TASTES differ, that is nothing new,
 But, to exactly meet your wishes,
 I know that nothing else will do
 Save Dirt-pies served in dainty dishes;
 Yet even vain votaries of Venus
 Cover their cates with prudent icing;
 Always remember this, Silenus,
 That "smut" requires a lot of "spicing."

A little "muck" helps things to grow,
 But weeds come first, and you must thin 'em;
 "Old cocks" like you should never crow
 On Dunghills with—no Diamonds in 'em.
 'Tis true, we welcome buxom Beauty,
 And Bacchus brightens our tables,
 But leave to "scavengers" the duty
 Of cleaning out "Augean Stables."

Demurely veil the pictured Passion;
 To strip her naked were a pity:

Though Fools and Follies are in fashion
With pungent puns we'll purge the city.
Let the cowled hypocrites insist
That Love is but a luring Lorey ;—
In our creed the Pleasure missed—
Is what shall make our Purgatory.

Some bigots hold that wit and wine
Are sins against the brain and body,
But we believe it good to join
A genial " toast " to jovial " toddy " ;—
So here's to Wine that makes us mellow
And (as we know) our prospects doubles,
And here's to Wit, the merry fellow,
Who helps to lighten Wisdom's troubles.

Thus " Mirth " shall " rule the roast," and
Reason

Grow gay though always standing steady ;
Pleasure can profit us in season,
And Love is always—right and ready :
No Paradise long lost I paint,
For Truth may look as fair as this is,
Unless Love sours to a Saint,
And Beauty must be bribed for kisses.

Let priests and parsons fabricate
Their creeds to suit their predilections,
Or Science even relegate
All Sentiment to—"conic sections";—
In spite of Saint and Scientist,
We'll stick to our time-honored Ruling,
That lips were but made to be kissed,
And that there's "fun" in Fancy's "fooling."

The Gods are not a gloomy lot
Of "Elohim,"—fierce, stern and cruel,
Nor will they damn the sage as sot—
Who adds rich grape juice to poor gruel;
And if they know that our Hereafter
Not likely to be endless blisses,
The easier they'll forgive Life's laughter,
Nor damn us for a few chance kisses.

The Jolly Old King of Yvetot.

THERE lived long ago as we know,
A jolly old King in Yvetot;—
Not in scepter and crown,
But with night-cap and gown—
He would sit in his palace of straw,
And administer—Liquor and Law:
Better king there was none
Since the world was begun,—
Better Monarch no man ever saw.

Whether champagne his tipple or beer,
He was always of excellent cheer;
Though but four times a day
Could he feast, he was gay,
And grew fat and funny in spite of his
“Diet”;

He feared no rebellion or riot,
For his Subjects were few,
And they very well knew
That His Jolly old Highness loved quiet.

What cared he for Fame and such “Trump-
ery”?

112 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Enough to be "King of His Company";
For his belly—a glass,
For his bower—a lass;
And the rest he would leave to the sinners
Who shared his debauches and dinners,
Content to be one
Of the Leaders of Fun,
Though the Sages might call him an Ass.

He ne'er put his pate under steeple,
And laughed at all clerical people;
But the little he had
He would give—to make glad
The sorriest subject, who needed it most:
And I think his leal "Laureate" may truth-
fully boast

That,—in spite of his spreces,—
The Lord loves such as these,
And won't let them go quite "to the bad."

His heart was too liberal and large
To keep but one Mistress in charge;—
"There is safety in numbers," they say,
Said this Monarch so gallant and gay:
So he slipped about town
Without scepter or crown;—
And whether to maiden or matron he went,

The Jolly Old King of Yvetot. 113

He was certain to win a most willing consent;
To "His Highness" they never said Nay.

Thus, with much better reason than most
Royal Heads,—he could honestly boast
That he really was "Pater Patriæ,"
Or tried to be such, as you see:
Whether blondes or brunettes,
Whether prudes or coquettes,
He was willing to welcome them all to his arms,
And to give (when he had them) his "crowns"
for their charms,
Such a liberal ruler was he.

No taxes he laid on the "Land,"
But on "Liquor" (as you'll well understand)
Some "license" was needed, no doubt,
To keep it from all leaking out;
So on every Brown Jug
He—would levy a—mug,
And drink to the health of all things that are
nice,
From kisses "on fire"—to champagne "on
ice":
With his chin quite atilt,
8

114 Songs of the Sakhohnagas.

All the "revenue" was spilt
In an opening—just under his—"pug."

A Monarch so merry was this,
So fond of a "meal" or a "miss,"
That throughout his long life
The sole "War to the knife"
Was against—not John Bull but his—beef,
And Turkeys—not Turks came to grief:
No "new leaf would he turn"
For wise-acres to learn;—
Not "bodies" he banished—but—Books;
His Lord's—scullions,—his Counselors—cooks,
And "good living" his only Belief.

And when this good king of Yvetot
Died,—as kings and churls must as we know,
Strange to say all his leal subjects cried
Not because he had lived—but had died;
'Tis not often that Monarchs are missed
By even the lips they have kissed,
And to weep for them—one of the rarest of
things
To happen, I fancy, to the Greatest of Kings—
In spite of their conquests and pride.

The Jolly Old King of Yvetot. 115

And to honor his memory best,—
After laying his body to rest,
A portrait they made of his “mug,”—
Representing him draining a jug;
And over the door—where of yore a bush
showed
Where liquor was offered to lighten life’s
load,—
His picture was hung;—
That the old and the young
Might remember, whenever their “spirits” ran
low,—
The rum reign and the “smiles” of the King of
Yvetot.

The Watering of the Shamrock !

BUT little it matters to us

Where St. Patrick was buried or born,
But I'm sure such a "jolly old cuss"

Must sometimes have taken a "horn,"
Else the spirit would never, I'm sure,

Have moved him to scotch all the snakes;
For he did it no doubt to secure

His "lambs" from the worst woe of
"wakes."

When he first "wore the green," as we know,

'Twas a Shamrock he stuck in his hat,
As a symbol or emblem to show

(And I think you'll confess it was pat!)
That the three gladsome Graces of Life—

Wit, Woman and Wine—was his text;
Only Hermits who turn love to strife,
With such a sweet theme would grow vexed.

But Saints not so sour and stern

Won't quarrel with sensible creeds,

The Watering of the Shamrock. 117

And even good Christians can earn
Heaven's help without "counting their
beads";
A venomless wit never harms,
And "Lachrymæ Christi" revives:
What more Heavenly, sure, than the charms
Of virtuous and vigorous wives?

Our Saint was a wide-awake fellow—
Not given to sleep the day through,
But up when the East was still yellow—
He could scarcely avoid "Mountain Dew";
Do you think when he stopped at some shanty,
Where were "praties" alone and "poteen,"
That he rudely refused rations scanty,
And called his host's liquor unclean?

Nay! He certainly stuck to the flagon,
And mixed every jorum with jokes,
And if a poor girl with no rag on
(Unlike the false prude, who still cloaks
Her sins in gay silks) bade him enter,
I'm sure he would never decline,
For he knew that no Saint could prevent her
From choosing her own Valentine.

118 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

I wish that St. Pat had come over
From Cork some few centuries back,
Bringing with him a sowing of clover,
And Shillalahs wherewithal to whack
Every snake (be it viper or "rattle")—
Cutting short their infernal increase:
It would help both poor Christians and cattle,
Who might then live in clover and peace.

Did he kill all the snakes (scotch and score 'em)
Not one rattle-trap leaving behind,
I would make him and mix him a jorum
He would drink till his blarney grew blind;
For say what you will, a mixed whisky
Is the spirit that moves us at will,
And even a Saint will grow frisky
If you ice it and spice it with skill.

Then here's to St. Patrick—the soaker!
Who knew that "still waters run deep";
He loved both a jorum and joker
To help him his vigils to keep;
He scotched all the snakes (though 'twas risky)
That troubled old Erin the Green;
That's the reason why good "Irish whisky"
Makes the very best sort of "poteen."

True Love Runs Always Smoothly!

WHO said that "True love roughly runs"
Was but a faithless fellow,
Or argued from the fickle ones
Whose fancies ne'er grow mellow;
Too early blossoms nipp'd by frost—
Or fruits too soon maturing,
Green fruitage hardly worth the cost
Or trouble of securing.

True love is not the fickle boy
With roses crowned and ringlets,
Who only lures us to destroy,
And shoulders errant winglets;
Who plumes his feathers for new flights
With every change of season;
From him Doubt steals life's best delights,
And Time betrays each treason.

'Twere better said, that "True love runs
"The smoother for its trueness";
And he who fickle Fancy shuns,
Not lured by gilded newness,

120 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Trusting but hearts that housed him long,
That ay gave shelter kindly,
Will find that love but grows more strong
From loving not too blindly.

Who said that " True love never ran
As smoothly as blind passion,"
Had only studied love and man.
In superficial fashion;
Deceived perhaps by those nine fools
Who woo the flirts they follow,
Forgetting that by Wisdom's rule
Nine hearts in ten are hollow.

True love is not the offering touched
With ever hungering fires,
Whose altar-cloth is smeared and smutched
With stains of loose desires;
True love is not the gift that brings
Doubts, sorrows and heart-burnings,
Whose sweets are fenced about by stings,
Like hives that hoard their earnings.

Nay! True love smoothly runs, I wiss,
Fenced well from all disaster,
Hope ripens to the richest kiss

True Love Always Runs Smoothly. 121

And Truth is Distrust's master ;
Coquettes may scatter golden smiles,
And flirts their favors barter,
But hearts untouched by Folly's wiles,
No scourging doubts can martyr.

True love wears myrtles wreathed with
palms,
And brings not thorns, but roses ;
An Eden Island fenced by calms
Prophetic Hope discloses ;
There Jealousy can find no food
To keep his fancies lusty,
And Passion, by the Graces woo'd,
More tender grows and trusty.

Banish this boy with fickle wings
To some far Purgaory,
To some most barren shore where sings
A lying, luring Lorey ;
A flippant flirt whose sweetness cloy—
Coquetting with a dozen ;
Such favors may content the boys
She likes to kiss and cozen.

True Love is no such fickle friend
As this young cub with pinions,

Whose court a host of frauds attend
From Folly's wide dominions;
Nay! Love's an angel robed in white,
Whose sanctity can leaven
The lusts that lure us with delight,
Transfiguring Earth to Heaven!

The Postern ; or, the Squire's Quest !

(From the German.)

WEARIED and worn I reach at last
The well-known postern-door,
And find, alas, the latch is fast,
It will not open more ;
But lovers, who have trysts to keep,
Will laugh at bolts and bars :
The crumbling wall I lightly leap,
Watched only by the stars.

Arched portal of the castle hall
Is not where I slip in ;
There let the Knights and Nobles all
Flock when fine feasts begin ;
Let dandies strut with nodding plumes,
And dames in rich attire :
If not one of the “ *stable* grooms,”
I’m an *un-stable* “ Squire.”

The high and haughty Castellan
Looks down on Squires like me,

Yet, certes, the gentle lady Anne
 Waits at the trysting tree.
 If all these lords and ladies fine
 The proudest "portals" know,
 The secrets of the "postern" mine,
 When I would come and go.

His "Highness" feasts on dainties rare,
 And rose-red wine he sips,
 But I—a squire only—fare
 On beauty's rosier lips:
 The honors of the court confer
 On scamps who push and shove,
 But modest souls like mine prefer
 The heraldries of Love.

Yea, even should death quench this flame
 Of Youth's too short-lived springs,
 My modest soul would hardly claim
 The heaven reserved for kings;
 But though St. Peter's portals shut,
 The good saint kept my score,
 And winking at me just said: "Cut
 Through yonder postern door!"

"This portal grand, where here I stand,
 Reserved for Power and Fame;

The Postern ; or, the Squire's Quest. 125

Here everything is stiff and grand—
And tiresome and tame;
But yonder little postern leads
To Edens not too fine,
Where beauties never count their beads,
And Love finds Wit and Wine.”

Let Glory enter at the gate
Where Grandeurs stand on guard;
I shall not grumble at my fate
If from all fame I'm barr'd;
But give me soft content that brings
The peace of sunlit days,
And Love, who, in the shadow sings
In modest Beauty's praise.

Lacrīmæ Christi.

(From the German.)

IN Highlands, where the vineyards give
Draughts always sour and sharp,
Of old a minstrel used to live,
A master of the harp;
With Emperor Frederick southward went
From Alpine heights to where
The Roman roses softly scent
The sweet Italian air.

Nay, further sunward played his glees,
Where Naples glittering lies,
A city shored by summer seas,
And sheltered by soft skies;
There first from rustic vases poured
A wine so rich and rare,
Our minstrel felt such draughts had scored
Glad conquest over Care.

For this rare wine like music thrills,
Like beauty's blush it glows;

Its magic from all hearts distils
The best Love hopes or knows.
Mine Host, what wine is this you bring?
The happy Harper cries;
One drop could make old Satan sing
In spite of all hell's sighs.

Within my veins I feel the blood
Of "twenty" pulse once more;
Life's tides again sweep at the flood,
And Hope leads on before!
Stout Boniface, with smiles replies:
This wine that charms and cheers,
Nursed ever 'neath God's golden skies,
We always call "Christ's tears."

Our minstrel, gazing on the draught
That seemed to flame and flower,
Remember'd wines in Highlands quaffed
At home, dry, harsh and sour;
This vintage of his Home Land hills
With puckering lips recalls,
For there the hoar-frost often chills,
And dim the sunlight falls.

But this rich Wine hath *sipped the sun*
From March to soft September,

128 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

And he who sees its rubies run
Can only Love remember.
Then on his knees the minstrel sank,
And raised his eyes to Heaven:
Oh, Lord, to Thee I now give thank
For this draught sent to heaven

Life's bitter crust; and should Christ weep
On this sad earth again,
Oh, let him tearful vigils keep
Where Highland vineyards stain
My memory with wines so sharp—
They brought a sense of pain,
Dulled the glad music of my harp,
And soured my heart and brain.
Oh, dear Christ, give us "Tears" like this,
And Beauty's smiles we'd hardly miss!

The Holy Alliance of Love and Folly.

(From the German.)

THE singer of a summer song
In rose-girt garden biding,
Around him lads and lassies throng,
No stern duennas chiding.
Keep quiet, boys! the poet cries,
Give heed, Madge, Myrtle, Mabel;
The Graces should become more wise
By studying this fable.

In this lost earth of ours, left,
By chance, strayed far Dan Cupid,
Of all his heavenly hopes bereft,
He felt both sad and stupid.
O, hearken to my prayers, grim Jove!
From high Olympus banished,
In vain through this vain world I rove,
Whence Truth and Trust have vanished.

With all of Eden's charms adorned—
Grace, beauty, wit and passion—

'Tis safe to say I'm never scorned,
 Indeed, I'm quite the fashion;
 But though I rule a thousand hearts,
 No harvest 'scapes Time's sickle;
 The wiser damn my rankling darts,
 Declare my joys all fickle.

The sages say my lures are cheats,
 They leave no charms unhidden,
 And he who tastes the proffered sweets
 Finds love the "fruit forbidden";
 Who's gay to-day to-morrow grieves,
 Who "makes" to-morrow "misses";
 Of all my treasures Prudery leaves
 Not even Youth's first kisses.

In such a world I would not stay;
 No Promised Land—no Moses
 To guide me by some sunlit way
 From thickset thorns to roses;
 The pearls I scatter near and far
 They say are only pebbles;
 The Passions, pilgrims from some star
 More fair than this, are rebels.

Dan Cupid's grandpapa, great Jove,
 Harkened the Love God's pleading,

Holy Alliance of Love and Folly 131

Yet knew no world had ever throve
If barr'd from bliss and breeding;
So, from the Halls of Heaven he sends
To earth Love's only sister;
As long as these continue friends
Joy reigns—and Cupid kissed her.

And who is she, this rose-lipp'd maid
Who sings and smiles so gayly?
The roses of her crown may fade,
Yet still she dances daily;
Wisdom may wear a robe of rags,
Truth's often melancholy,
But this maid's tongue forever wags
In mirth; her name is Folly.

United thus by Jove's decree,
Folly and Love together,
Even Grief in gray shall fly and flee,
And clouds bring sunny weather;
With roses crown my grizzled hairs,
No "death's-head" daunts our chances;
Give Reason rest and banish cares—
The blind must trust—blind chances!

To Mæcenus !

Horace.)

LONG since Mæcenus, waiting for the sign,
Within its cask hath slept the ripening wine;
Balms to anoint thee shall my servants bring,
And flowers to crown thee as our festive King.

Snatch some brief pleasure from the busy
days,—

The dust and turmoil of the City's ways;
From Æsula turn and Telegon's blue walls,
And Tiber—whitening into waterfalls.

Desert the Rich who give but empty shows,
And seek with me the joys of wise repose;
Leave Rome behind with all its din and dust;
To modest Love and faithful Friendship trust.

Even a Cræsus wearies of his gilded home;
'Tis well at times to roam from even Rome,
Seeking some rustie roofage, where expectant
sits

One of the best of friends, my friend,—if not
of wits.

These are the days of desolate dust and drouth,
When Sol grows ardent—Sovereign in the
South;

Andromeda's star-crowned sire shines revealed,
And Proeyon rages o'er the azure field.

The languid shepherds and their fleecy flocks
Seek the cool shelter of the woods and rocks,
The silent margins of the rivers miss
The beekoning flowers and the winds that kiss.

All rest save thee (on cares of State intent),
Perplexed with troubles of a Continent,
Fearing lest by the factious Don—or Cyrus'
realm—to-day
The conquered hosts should strive against
Rome's wiser sway.

The issues of the future the wise Gods enshroud
In Night impenetrable; sunshine, friend, or
cloud,
Still rest with Jove, who lets no mortal scan
Even the length or limits of life's narrow span.

The Present heed, and its due value weigh;
The Future—endless—links with this brief
day;

134 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Words, thoughts and acts—the drops that bit
by bit

Add to the Ocean of the unknown Infinite.

What human prescience can foresee the course
Of one chance drop,—one atom of life's force?
The river mirrors but its narrow banks, and
these

Can give no truthful picture of Fate's wider
seas.

The river ruffles and its beauty dies,
For calmest waters best reflect the skies;
Thus, too, our souls, if quite at peace within,
Best mirror Heavens that they yet may win.

Let the day bring its treasures or its tears,
All gifts and griefs are balanced by the years;
What has been—Is, what shall be—who can
shun?

Strive not—but rather say:—Thy will be done!

Strive not with Fortune for her fickle gifts,
With tides she changes and with winds she
shifts;

Fair-faced to all, yet true at last to none;
Who trust her most. are most of all undone.

Treat her in kind; if she gives smiles—smile
back;

But do not sue her when her love grows slack;
Roofed with content, with Virtue's modest fare
Let Poverty—a dowerless bride—thy cottage
share.

'Tis not for such to weep when stormy winds
assail,

And the bent mast is shivering in the gale;
Wealth dares the waves, wins much and loses
more;

But we—whose share a shallop holds—keep
close to shore.

Though the rich galleys wrecked, still wreckless
to the last,

I bide my time, and wisely dodge the blast:
Through the Ægean storms, led by the sailor's
sign,

I win the Haven, and Love's modest home is
mine.

The Tippler's Test.

(*Too-tonic.*)

A MERRY chase, my men, was ours
 To-day, cried Robin Hood,
 And now 'neath yonder cloister-towers
 Gray Monks keep vintage good
 Stored in deep cellars; let us test
 My good Lord Abbot's taste,
 And if his wines are of the best
 We'll never let them waste.

"Vobiscum Pax," most Reverend Sir,
 And welcome be the chance,
 After long chase with whip and spur,
 To taste red wines of France;
 For we have heard your cloisters boast
 Of draughts that none surpass;
 My merry comrades here would toast
 Your "Lordship" in a glass.

The Abbot bids the Cellarer bring
 A bumper of such size,

It circled twice around the ring,
Though each bold Huntsman tries
To do his best and drink it out .
Down to the very lees ;
But though each drinker dry as drought,
Enough for ten of these.

Then spake bold Robin : Better draught
No King, upon my soul,
Hath ever thirsting thankful quaffed
Than I from this great bowl ;
And if there be a Monk on Earth
Who can this bumper drain,
I pledge my word as man of worth
To give him as his gain

This goblet filled up to the brim
With weight of golden coin.
Thereon a Monk steps up to him,
Broad shouldered—large of loin—
A sturdy fellow fit to swing
Broad battle ax or blade
In conflict, when the arrows sing
And Knightly lances laid.

“ But prithee give me time to pray
Alone—a little space ! ”

138 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

So spoke the Monk, and turned away
To seek some quiet place
Perchance, where he might well invoke
Great Bacchus, God of Wine,
For emptying such a bowl—no joke
As you might well opine.

The Abbot, doubtful, shakes his head;
“The test he fears to stand!”
But ere a good half hour sped
Our Monk’s again on hand;—
He grasps the bowl and lifts it up,
Gulps fast and drinks it dry;
Looks round and laughs, sets down the cup:—
Bravo!—the Hunters cry.

Astonished stood bold Robin Hood,
And all his men as well;
Some magic this not understood,
The working of some spell.
Asks Robin: When you left us erst
A space, perhaps for prayer,
What God inspired you with this thirst
That ten men well might share?

Nay! Master Robin, simpler far
The method and the man:—

In our cellars bumpers are
As big as this you scan,
And one of these I first drained out
To gauge my gullet's chance:—
If ever of one's powers in doubt,—
Why test them—in advance.

ROSES AND RUE.

Love's Starlit Noon !

'As wide thy sheltering wings extend,
O Night! how sweet thy shades are;
Thy shadows all true loves befriend;—
Less cold the shyest maids are,
For though thy stars still watch above,
They are in league with all who love.

Those stars are sentinels that keep
Long watch for erring lovers,
For hopes will slip and hearts will sleep;
Though Cupid beats all covers,
And bags the game (that's his of rights)
Always most readily o' nights.

True lovers hail the sickle moon,
That reaps the winrows twinkling
Of stars—that signal Passion's noon;
And we have all an inkling
That even prudish maids would kiss
On nights as dearly dark as this.

Who woos by day may miss his mark,
And never find a lady,
But if you'll bide discreeter Dark
In bowers shy and shady,
The haughtiest maid (in such eclipse)
May breathe her soul out on your lips.

If Danaes you're content to win,
Choose sultry hours and sunny,
Wear all your bravery and begin
To measure out the money;
Maidens there be—fair, proud and cold—
Who yet have given themselves for gold.

But if some fair Fidelity, sweet,
Hath touched your heart and fancy,
And you would make her pulses beat
Through Cupid's necromancy,
Then choose the hours—when stars above
Announce the shadowy Noon of Love.

That Sweet Word—"Ours!"

METHINKS in days now fading far
 Into dim memcry's retrospect,
 When every eve saw Love's bright star
 Lighting the lands we recollect,
 That you and I were then, my dear,
 Neighbors, both neighborly and near.

Ah! then it was your reign of roses—
 Full twenty golden years ago,
 And boyhood hardly needs a Moses
 To guide him to that Land, you know,
 That Land of Promise and Proposal,
 Where Beauty stands at Youth's disposal.

I was a country lad, and you
 A lassie rustic quite and rosy;
 In those days I was "green"—not "blue,"
 And doubtless often pert or prosy;
 But how I loved and what befell
 Your blushes, dear, perhaps might tell.

There ran a shallow brooklet brown
 And clear between your farm and ours,

That Sweet Word—"Ours." 143

Whose waters rippling softly down
Were fenced with ferns and fringed with
flowers;

And though you stood on t'other side,
The distance, dear, was not so wide.

A lambkin could have leaped that brook,
'A willow wand could arch it over,
Yet you and I would only look—
Not leap—scant breadths of corn or clover:
Was it some lack of wish—or wit—
That kept me still from crossing it?

But buds to blossoms burgeon out,
And rivulet ripens into river:—
Love, that arch Archer, none can doubt
Keeps arsenal'd arrows in his quiver,
And soon or later feathers a shaft
To strike and drive the dullest daft.

So I, though not quite shallow—shy,—
Dim-visioned, too, began to find,
Not what the doubting damsels sigh
(That Love is lame and Beauty blind!),
But—that where Friendship limps—Love
leaps,—
That Passion wakes when Prudence sleep.

144 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Before Love's rosy reign began,
How often, as a rustie rover,—
Your Father's fields I used to scan,—
The tass'ling corn—the purpling clover—
The brooklet's fringing flowers so tall,—
Yet somehow missed the best of all.

But one day you that side—I this,
I faltering still and you shy smiling,—
Perhaps at fancies dull men miss
(For girls are subtle and beguiling),
You hardly chary with your chaffing,
Yet love seemed lurking in your laughing.

And I, though with some churlish doubts,
Prepared to hold (still looking over)
That even when a maiden pouts
Such lips would lure bees cloyed with clover;—
That eyes, now melting and now mocking,—
Kept all love's sweetest fancies flocking!

That day, no doubt in ambush lying,
Love lurked and spied the youthful couple;
He saw your smiles and heard my sighing,
Then bent his sinewy Bow and souple;
Swift—right and left—two arrows flit,
And lad and lassie both were hit.

There grew a rampant briar beside
The brooklet's border, leafy bowers
With long sprays tossing wild and wide,
And scores of flushed and fragrant flowers;
And the fair lass made fruitless quest
For one rose—crowning all the rest.

She could not reach it, though her arms
Stretched half-way that brown brooklet o'er,
Whilst I took time to con the charms
That somehow I had missed before;—
Such Rose to rape needs over-reaching,
And Love asks but short time for teaching.

I sprang to aid her, but she pouted;
Abashed I stood with doubts debating,
My budding hopes fade fast—thus flouted:
What sharper pang than wasted waiting?
Ah! Love is such a timorous thing,
That every trifling doubt can sting.

Though thus my passion seemed impeached,
Some hopeless courage mustering,
Up to the roses ripe I reached,
Amidst their leaves close clustering;—
I seized them, cried:—Here, take *your*
flowers!"

She smiled in answer:—call them—"Ours"!

146 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Not "hers" but "ours":—how in me stirred
A pulse that gladdened into glees,
And like the singing of a bird—
When Spring is garlanding the trees,
My lips, that still some doubt deters,
Kept whispering only:—"ours"—not "hers"—

But waking wits, that bliss had dazed,
Guided me from that soft eclipse,
And half afire and half amazed,
I solved the riddle on her lips,
And there, amid green corn and clover,
Con'd the sweet lesson ten times over.

Yes! after that no rose was hers
That was not mine!—we shared together
Life's blossoms (sometimes too the burs),
One roof in clear or cloudy weather
For both: ah! who forgets the powers
Love grants to that sweet word called—
 "Ours" !

Crowned Slaves!

Mock lovers, if you choose, who sigh,
But how can Hope live if Love should die?
 Sweet Love, that teaches soft consent
To wooings of some kindred soul?
Hope is the Pilot,—Love the “Pole”
 That points the happy continent
Towards which some set their sails in vain;
 For there are rocks and wrecks to dare.
 Luck is too lean for all to share,
And few shall reach that “Flowery main”;
Yet though the skies so seldom fair,
 And wicked waves their white teeth
 show,
 I’d dare the fiercest winds that blow
To win that Haven over there—
 Where Beauty,—fair as the flowers of
 Spring,
Crowns slaves as Glory crowns no king.

Lover's Quarrels!*(From the German.)*

CRIES Madge to Mart: Forever we leave to
meet no more,
'Tis best at once to sever; wipe out the shame-
less score;
Or, keep your Nineteen steady and let the
Twentieth part,
As yet I am not ready—to share so large a
heart.

Until this old pine, darkling, where once we
made our vows,
Shall show red roses sparkling upon its dusky
boughs,
We part:—The word was spoken; he left her
with a groan,
For roses, as a token, on pine-trees never known.

She closed the sash, that's certain, she even
slammed the door,
Pulled fiercely down the curtain, in fact she—
almost swore.

Next day that way returning, and glancing at
the pine,

Lo! like Love's beacon burning, its boughs with
blossoms shine.

A score of ripened roses tied on with ribbons
blue,

The door once locked—uncloses, the curtain
goes up too;

And there in shade half hidden, like may-
blooms in arrears,

A lover's lips unhidden kiss away a lassie's
tears.

Epiphytes.

THE faintest wish that Love might whisper
To ears attuned to dainty dalliance;—
No over-zealous vim and valiance,
But fireless fancies—one might lisp a
Diffident virgin of not over
Some fifteen summers,—fair—but fruitless;
Passion still an “air plant”—rootless,
Waiting for that romantic rover
Whose kisses ripen and make ready
The happier harvest:—thus to her gently
(As to a saint)—speak reverently,
Nursing your faith—long grown unsteady:
Nor teach too soon this flower of Heaven,
That Love’s sweet fruit—needs earth for leaven.

Dark Eyes and Hours.

VIOLET eyes and cheeks of rose,
Cherry lips that soft uncloze
Revealing pearly teeth,—Heaven knows!
Are charms to win an anchorite;
But ebon locks and soft brown eyes,
Pale cheeks on which a shadow lies
Like the starred dusk of fading skies,
Can tune our hearts to new delight;
And lead us from the gilded glare
Of Day to dim-lit bowers where
Love's stars shine through the silvery night.
Love is a jealous God, who shuns
The Gardens lit by golden suns:—
Dark eyes—and hours—are his by right.

More Prudish—Than Prudent.

SHE looked up and laughed and she looked down
and blushed,
And her red lips she closed tight together,
As much as to say—that the thing should be
hushed,
Sheltered safe from the wind and the weather;
Whatever it might be, no game should be flushed
Unless 'twere in Hymen's own heather;
She didn't feel sure, but stray footsteps had
crushed
Some faint feeling—or was it a feather?
At any rate, what is the value of speech
When a blush—or a touch or a soft sigh can
teach,
Whilst the tongue in a tangle would get you?
Oh, sly laughing lassie, but keep within reach,
With your lips like red cherries, your blush like
a peach,
Sure my kisses will never forget you.

Immortelles.

THOUGH Love pilfered every rose
That or Earth or Eden knows
(Blossoms whence sweet nectar drips!),
He could never mate your lips.

Though the violet in the shade,
And the pansies lent their aid,
Though Love stole from April skies,
He could never match your eyes.

Not all the blooms of OTTARAY
Can compare with you to-day,—
You—the fairest flower that brings
Memories sweet of sun-kissed Springs.

Barren Winter—Bitter Death,—
Shall not chill you with their breath;
Ere the smiling Summer dies,
Angels errant from the skies,

Tempted by such rare perfume,
Shall transplant you from my tomb,
And in Heaven's happier air
You shall blossom ever fair:

Like the Saintly Lilies shown
Whitening round the golden Throne,
Breathing forth, as Mercy must,
Tender fragrance o'er my dust.

In my grave enough of bliss
That you send a scented kiss:
Touched by such a deep desire
Even ashes turn to fire,
And in flames of incense rise
To share the sunshine of Love's skies.

Yea! were Eden twice as fair,
I should miss you, darling, there;—
Better dust—where blossoms are—
Than Faith's Heaven without Love's Star.

Prim Rose!

SHE was no doubt quite rosy,
And Rose they called her too,
Yet I found her rather prosy,
Indeed a little—"blue";

And should I give her such a name
As just her mind or manner shows,
I think the little maid might claim
The Prude's prænomen—of—"PRIM ROSE."

Brown Eyes and Blue !

BUT yesterday I loved you, dear,
Indeed, the matter seemed so clear,
I told you all about it ;
But lately, to my great regret,
I fell in love with Lou, Lisette ;
Hard fact, though you may doubt it.

Your eyes were brown, her eyes were blue,
And she was charming (so were you),
Alas ! I would she were not ;
I know 'tis fickle thus to veer,
But you are distant, she is near,
And only cold hearts err not.

Your lips were rosy (hers are too),
And when I kissed her first,—kissed Lou,
Half yours—half hers—her graces seemed ;
She has your winning ways and wiles,
She sighs like you, like you she smiles,
And kissing her, of you I dreamed.

If I love Roses wet with dew,
Shall I not like the Lilies too ?

Each of their kind the fairest!
'Twere false to both to love but one;
To both kind Heaven sends shower and sun,
With scents and tints the rarest.

I haven't a doubt but that you'll pout,
Lock up your love, and turn me out
Of the heart that used to house me;
But, sweet Lisette, I love you yet,
Your soft brown eyes I cannot forget,
Nor the charms that used to rouse me.

In the future, perchance, we yet may meet,
When blue are forgotten and brown eyes greet
The prodigal lover—returning;
If so, there's no doubt that in lieu of Lou,
Lisette, I shall once more be wooing you
In spite of your spite and spurning.

For believe me, my heart is no narrow niche
For only a single Saint; such pitch
Of Monotheism's too tight a tether;
I love brown eyes as well as blue,
To both Lou and Lisette my heart is true,
Adoring—both together.

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It were *singular* surely (the pun may pass)
To love always and only a *single* lass,
And to love her willy-nilly!
But whatever others may say or do,
I know I can safely worship two,—
And I love both—Rose and Lily.

Love's Merry War.

COME, strip away these jealous frills
And folds that hide thy graces;
Love needs no lawns and laces
When passion's fever throbs and thrills
In hearts consumed by fond desires:
To such the most enticing charms
Are those that come with "naked arms"
To wage such "Merry War"—as fires
No soul with hate. Not over graves,
But gardens gay our white flag waves
A welcome to all wooers true.
Not freedom True Love ever craves,—
For here the happiest are the slaves
Who hug their chains,—as lovers do.

Love and Strife.

THE Past is as dead as the flowers
Whose fruitage the seasons make sweet,
Not April, with all of her showers—
Not August's full harvest of heat—
Can bring back those vanished perfumes,
And the glory and grace of dead blooms.

The apple-buds, dimpled in May-time,
That lured the striped bees from their hives,
Soon faded away like the play-time
That gilds the fresh dawn of short lives,
And the petals, like rose-dreams of lust,
Lie shredded and shriveled in dust.

The Dawning comes flashing with glory
From the verge of a shadowless Day,
But we know 'tis the often-told story:—
Our lives and our loves gather gray,
And darken and die like an ember
Quenched under cold snows of December.

Not the strength of the Titans, up-heaving
Their shoulders like mountains, could check

Time's "Juggernaut Wheel," that is leaving
The World and its worms but a wreck,
Pressing out from ripe lives the red wine
Of the woes Death may render divine.

The Gods shall forget, in a measure,
The curses Immortality brings;
They shall taste for a moment the pleasure
That is sweeter because of its stings;
But the hoariest virtues of Heaven
Shall leave us but sorrows as leaven.

With the blood that is seething and subtle
They shall quicken their rusty old brains;
Lust and Love weave a web, with Time's shuttle,
Too dark to show clearly all stains,
And the passions of Paradise bring
With their sweets—thorns that rankle and sting.

They shall madden, like mortals, forgetting
The weight of the glories they bear;
Proud Goddesses, moved to coquetting,
Shall seem to the Gods doubly fair,
Whose ichor shall gather some glow
From the lures of such loves as we know

Touched by fires, undreamed of before,
The snows of Olympus shall melt;

162 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

The blisses, ungarnered of yore,
Ripening now—shall be fathomed and felt,
And the light loves to Mankind once given
Thrill the Gods—nodding nobly in Heaven.

Do I envy the Gods?—Not a tittle!
Olympus is white with its years!
My strivings may seem to them little,
But pleasures take measure from tears:
Without Strife's quick parry and thrust,
The Sword of the Soul would soon rust.

Even Love hath no fountain unfailing,
Yielding draughts of unending delight;
The Goddess forever unveiling
Her charms, shall the ages not blight?
Nay! The flower that never fades, misses
The ripening fruition of blisses.

Yes, even the Gods must grow jaded
If no changes for better or worse;
Let me live 'til life's blossoms have faded,
But a surfeit of sweets is a curse:—
And he but a laggard who shares
The World's kisses—yet blind to its cares.

A Puzzle in Petticoats !

BROWN eyes full of shadowy gleamings
Soft as twilights that whisper in June,
Sweet eyes wherein all of my dreamings
Seem bathed in the light of May's moon;
Lips jubilant now with Joy's laughter,
And now all a-tremble with bliss:—
First the sunshine of gladness, and after—
The shadows that shelter a kiss.

Soft, bonny, brown hair—with a ripple
Where all its gloom turns into gold,
Like the dark wines of Chios, whose "tipple"
Gladdened pagans and poets of old;
Eyes soft with the shadow of sadness,
Like dusk on a slumberous sea,
Yet lips, whereon Mirth—in her madness—
Laughed like Love—when his wings flutter free.

Sad eyes and glad lips thus together
Only mocking the queries we make,
Whether frolicsome Fairy, or whether
A sad-hearted Saint for love's sake;

164 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Are there tears hidden under those lashes?
Are there smiles lurking under those lips?
Embers glow under cover of ashes,—
Flowers flash where the precipice dips!

Is this gladness but mocking and masking?
Is this sadness but semblance of woe?
Scant answers I get for my asking,
Smiling lips saying "yes!"—sad eyes "no!"
And yet there is pleasure in guessing
At riddles so subtle as this;
Doubt at times, it is true, is distressing,
But Certainty might not prove—bliss.

I doubt, for the heart-strings are hidden,
And the ear of life dull to their tones;
Peer not in the Darkness Forbidden
Where the Past keeps her moldering bones!
There rises a wraith: say, what was it?
Dead loves or dead lusts that arose?
Lock the door of Life's "skeleton closet"
Lest you wake the grim ghosts of old woes.

I doubt,—but not beauty like this is,
I doubt,—but not graces like these;
Then give me, oh! give me your kisses,

And your heart you may share as you please!
I would win you, if but for a season
To gladden my heart as with wine,
That, though it may unsettle Reason,
Brings dreams—that—if false—seem divine.

Your heart may be heavy or hollow,
Nay! some I have known who had—none;
But the lure of your lips I would follow
As the meteor fast follows the Sun.
Those eyes may be sad with a yearning
For a lover, or a score of them,—lost;—
That heart (if you have one)—be burning
For some scamp you adored to your cost.

Brown eyes, with tears under their lashes,
Red mouth, laughter laid on its lips,—
Your heart may be—"ashes to ashes,"
And your innocence dark with eclipse;
But I turn to you still with a yearning
That only your kisses can still,
And my heart, whilst it breaks, is still burning
With the poisonous sweets you distil.

I would pluck you as Hope plucks the Flower
Whose thorns leave incurable scars;

166 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

I would win you, if but for one hour
To brighten Life's night with Love's stars.
I doubt,—but not beauty like this is,
I distrust,—but not graces like these;
Then give me, oh! give me your kisses,
And your heart you may share as you please!

The Violet's Appeal.

(From the German.)

CAME a lassie fair as day,
Walking down a country way
Where sweet blossoms met;
By the roadside in the grass,
Near where dozens daily pass,
Bloomed a—Violet.

Said the lassie: Here I know
Daily dozens come and go,
As I often do;
See this Violet up-thrust,
Covered deep with grime and dust,
Shows her bonnet blue.

Sighed the maid: Some day a cow
May come, sweet, as I do now,
Browsing on thy bloom;
From such fate my hand shall wrest
All thy beauty; on my breast
Perish in perfume.

But the Violet replies:—
Insincere are all thy sighs,
Let me rest in peace:—
If of browsing cows afraid,
That's no worse fate than to fade—
Plucked by girls—or geese!

Limited Liabilities and—Abilities.

(To one of the gigantic Graces.)

MUCH too liberal for my taste
Are such super-human Graces;
With such endless worlds of waist—
Who would dream of fond embraces?
Dared we yield to such Titanic
Tenderness as that heart covers,
Should she even pout—a panic
Would o'erwhelm her pigmy lovers.

Or, to put the matter mildly,
Let us say, instead of kissing,
She should hug one of them “wildly,”
There would be a lover “missing”:—
Lo! what limbs—what mighty muscles!
Molded firm and fair; behind them
Lusty curves that need no “bustles,”
Where, alas! so oft we find them.

Liberal charms she hath and lavish,
Bounteous breasts and length of limb,

But those lips that mine would ravish
 Rise above me far and dim:—
 Whom a Goddess loves—ere soaring
 To the level of her lips,—
 Let him take good heed lest scoring
 Victory should but quite eclipse

His faint flame in that large luster
 Which the Gods can face alone;—
 Rash the mortal who would trust her,
 And unclasp a Dian's zone:—
 Love, whose flame a Goddess kindles,
 All consuming leaves me lost,
 And my mortal passion dwindles
 When I come to count the cost.

Safer far than Grace or Goddess,
 Is some maiden frail and fond,
 Who, when you unlace her bodice
 (Whether she's brunette or blonde),
 Does not, though she hug you tightly,—
 Hugging—take away your breath;
 But a Goddess ravished rightly
 Soon would squeeze one quite to death.

Love Divine, like Heaven's ire,
 Is a flame that, dazzling, daunts you;

Limited Liabilities and—Abilities. 171

Safer far the soft desire,
That in Lower Realms enchants you.
Flowers that fade—for us are better
Than such flames—(more fierce than sweet);
Lightly let me wear Love's fetter
Whilst my fickle pulses beat!

Arms that might embrace a region
Wider than mine eyes could heed,—
Bosoms that could nurse a legion
Lips like mine I do not need;—
Such Titanic charms would curdle
All the busy blood within:
Only what my arms can girdle
Would my passions wear and win.

Narrow are Love's wants and wishes,
No wide world his hopes engage:—
Feast enough for him one "dish" is,
And his palace but a cage:
Too much love, like too much liquor,
Leaves its penalties behind;
Safest "flames" are those that flicker;
Fickle maids are often kind.

Love that never roams or ranges,—
That may suit diviner "swells,"

But I like to "ring my changes"
On a dozen different "belles";—
Here to-day, and there to-morrow;—
Aye to win—and ne'er to wive!—
Gathering sunshine—never sorrow—
For the Harvest of my Hive!

To Brunetta from an Old Beau !

BLONDES are but pallid blooms at best, sweet
but to striplings callow ;
Could I not find some dearer quest—I'd let
Love's fields lie fallow :—
Cheeks freckled oftener far than fair, and
eyes like milk and water,
With sallow arms and sorrel hair, or blonde—
that some one bought her.

But in the dusk of hazel eyes there gleams a
starry splendor
That dazzles with a glad surprise the hearts
that soon surrender ;
Dumb lips more eloquent than speech, and raven
locks that cluster
Above a brow that might impeach the whitest
marble's luster.

And graces sweeter e'en than these, with subtle
charms unspoken,
They bring poor Cupid to his knees, whilst all
his darts lie broken :—

174 Songs of the Sāhkohnagas.

Lovers are moths that seek the flame,—the lass
is but the candle;

On her we should not lay the blame if hearts
prove hard to handle.

You shine afar like some bright star above
Life's wildernesses;

Love scarcely knows how sweet you are—in
spite of all his guesses:—

If Luck but gave me elbow room,—if Life but
gave me leisure,—

I'd woo you as the bee the bloom, and hive your
honeyed treasure.

Dear, dazzled by your splendid eyes, my heart
still longs and lingers,

But I have prudent grown and wise since last
I burned my fingers;

Though fairest hands may light the flame no
less the moth will suffer,—

Yea, even hearts some kindness claim, though
they are doubtless tougher.

From blushing buds to bolder blooms I like to
flutter gaily,

Tasting hourly of new perfumes, testing dif-
ferent gardens daily;

To Brunetta from an Old Beau. 175

Your heart's hive may be honey filled with
sweets from holt and heather,
But in Love's lore I'm too well skilled to dare
Stings leagued together.

I take what gifts the Gods may give,—what
favors small the Graces,
Content if only Hope can live and brighten
Life's waste places;
I like the kindly warmth that cheers,—light
hearts and facile favors,
And leave to those of fewer years Hymenial
“flats and quavers.”

Though fickle-winged and fast you flit, your
beauty still bewitches;
Sirens—not Saints, you see, best fit in Cupid's
templed niches;—
And I, Brunetta, who have ne'er stooped to wear
Hymen's fetter,
Find you perhaps just doubly dear because you
are—*no better!*

Hymen ; or, Cupid in Chains !

ALL the world was calling Cupid
Light and lecherous and loose,
And the God at last grew troubled
At such undeserved abuse,
Fearing, like the birds that flutter
From the scarecrow's meager arms,
Timid Beauty might be frightened
By these false but fierce alarms.

With the Passions in the pillory,
And the Graces prison-bound,
Every fickle Fancy tethered,
Every Queen of Hearts discrowned ;—
Where could Cupid find a shelter
From the scandal-mongers then,
Who had chased Love helter-skelter
From the dark abodes of men ?

Sick of sanctimonious sinners,
Worried by the hypocrites,—
To escape from all these troubles

Hymen ; or, Cupid in Chains. 177

Cupid puzzled his poor wits ;
But when timid Love must battle
With a host of heartless Hates,
Scant the “ laurels ” that he gathers
From the hungry-handed Fates.

Beauty thus at last gave counsel,
Blushing deep with conscious shame :
There is but one chance, Dear Cupid,
You must straightway change your name ;
We must clip and bind your winglets
With some matron’s locks of hair,
We must break or blunt your arrows,—
But your “ beau ” ?—well, that we’ll spare.

You must give up all flirtations,
Frolics in the moonlit nights ;
Home-made pottage—not potations,
Homespun petticoats—not “ tights ;”
Cut the clubs, all sirens banish ;
Give up poetry—stick to prose :—
All your troubles, Dear, will vanish,—
If as Hymen you “ propose.”

Thus she said, and having spoken,
Cupid bent his weary head ;
One could see his heart was broken,

Though 'twas only "yes" he said:
 Since the cruel Fates have forced him
 Thus to banish all "fast friends,"
 With a "lass" we know, commences
 Love, and with "alas!"—it ends.

No bright smiles and sparkling "sillery,"
 No long lookings in soft eyes;
 With the Passions in the pillory,
 'Tis no wonder that he sighs;
 His old friends would never know him,
 Sad of wit and short of wing:—
 Hymen—is poor Love in fetters,
 Tied to woman's apron-string.

Lacking "cents," it is quite certain
 Love can be but Hymen's hack,
 And "Alack!" must be the ending
 That commences with "a lack!"
 "Tied" must wait, though Time will
 hasten

Onward to the days that bring,
 Not the saintly griefs that chasten,
 But the debts and doubts that sting.

Love, who once was lord and loyer,
 Full of laughter, life and song,

Hymen ; or, Cupid in Chains. 179

Now you hardly could discover
In this wight who limps along,
Sour of visage, wrinkled, rusted ;
Thus to grief his glory turns ;
And the God who blindly trusted,--
Now *high-menal* labor learns.

THE GLOAMING.

Love Hopeless.

LOVE came to me laughing, ay, laughing for-
sooth,
And his toying seemed joying,—his fables
seemed truth;
He proffered a goblet—that made my head
swim,
Though I sip'd but the bubbles that broke at
the brim.
Drink deeper, he cried,—there is luck in the
lees;
And I quaffed and I quaffed, 'til I sank on
my knees
To a maiden,—a maiden—the fairest of earth,
Who bade me drink deeper, for “Love” was
but Mirth!
I came to Hope weeping, bewailing the lust
That had trampled the roses of passion in
dust;—

O! Love is a Demon, not the Devil's self worse,
His lures are but lies, and his kisses a curse!

O! give me back, Love, all the pleasures I crave,
The dreams of my youth, and the riches I gave!
What bliss could I miss with the dearest one
there?

But alas, I discovered that Love—was Despair.

Love and Jealousy!*(From the German.)*

WHEN man was first invented, he
A sufferer long from ennui;
Indeed our earliest Gospel saith
He nearly bored himself to death:
Scant brains he had and fewer books,
There were no vintners and no cooks;
He hadn't even learned to woo
The woman,—who was then quite—New.

Lord Christ, who knew Creation's plan,
And saw the Gods unjust to 'Man,
Devoutly falling on his knees
Thus to the Father made his pleas:
The Earth, he cried, is sunk in gloom,
And Man disgusted with his doom;
Oh! let me send from Heaven above
To cheer their darkness Light and Love.

With Light to bless from sunlit skies,
With Love to wisely shut their eyes,

The World, at once, so merry grew
It made the Gods by contrast—blue;
For it must frankly be confessed
Long prayers put patience to the test,
And glory, grandeur, style and state
Must weary soon the Good and Great.

With Light to guide and Love to grace
So happy grew the Human race,
They laughed to scorn the Gods above
Who now had lost the Angel Love:
By contrast with Heaven's solemn rites,
The Earth seemed full of gay delights;
The jealous Gods resented this,
And counseled how to blight Man's bliss.

How best to punish Man and Maid
The "Lords" long pondered:—Love, afraid
Of being put in "leading strings"
Again in Heaven, used her wings,
And clearly showed imperious Jove
She much preferred to lightly rove
In Earthly fields,—to playing precise,
The model Prude of Paradise.

To lure back Love—as still they failed—
The Gods before this question quailed;

184 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Yet Earth with this one gift of Heaven
Rivaled their glory, if no leaven
They yet might find wherewith to raise
The Devil in a thousand ways,
And by some poison or some spell
Convert Earth's Heaven to a—Hell.

At last in their despair and doubt,
Old Satan, who was once kicked out
Of Heaven, was called on for advice,
As he was learned in every vice.
And thus this Prince of Darkness spoke:—
I've got a plan now in my "poke";
Among my servants and my slaves—
Some few were nobles, but most—Knaves;

Yet one there is, once Prince of Pride,
Who ever faithful by my side
Hath stood and served me zealously;—
In Hell we call him—Jealousy.
This cruel spirit let me send
To live on Earth with Love—as friend
And comrade:—all of Love's sweet foison
With incantations he can poison.

The very best of True Love's blisses
He turns to venom with fierce hisses

Of doubt and hate: this single vice
Would wreck the fairest Paradise!
The Gods consented, and on Earth,
Where Love once brought but Hope and Mirth,
Now Jealousy, who's ever near,
Breathes in the hapless lover's ear—

Such cruel fears and hateful doubts
That when a maiden sighs or pouts,
At once he sees his rivals share
Her fondest favors; and Despair
Steps in and bids him curse his fate
For—Trusting Woman!—Since this date,
Love linked with Jealousy is worse
Than all and every other curse.

And Earth, that once with Love supreme,
Was sweeter than the Gods can dream,
Now makes even Hell by contrast sweet—
In spite of all its drouth and heat.
Far better shun the rose-strewn ways
That lead to bowers where Beauty stays,
Than feel those pangs the Jealous must,
Who—ever loving—never trust.

Impatient.

EVER impatient?—Yes, so let it be,
I feel my fetters—yet I would be free;
A prison pens me, though my soul aspires
To purge itself in Purgatorial fires,
Thence rising undismayed to meet the End,
Where God stands steadfast, ready to extend—
Not only Hope, but Help—to him who wins
A lifelong warfare waged against all sins.

Impatient?—Yes, of all these frauds and
fools,—
Of all these cunning schemes and crazy
schools:—
Of all these howling hypocrites and cleric curs
Who'd win God's races with the Devil's
spurs;—
Of all these hogs and hounds who swell and
swill,
Yet make their betters ever foot the bill.

Impatient of these wicked wasps that sting;
“Dirt-daubers” all, that gather mud to fling

On cleaner lives, and thus with Dirt's help dare
To prove by contrast that Their record's fair.

Impatient of assassins who dare face no foe,
Yet sheathe their daggers in the heart of woe,
Stabbing with "They say," who is but the
mate—

False and unfathered—of their own mean hate.

Impatient of these Robbers' Rights, and Robbed
Men's wrongs;—

Of thriving thieves who should be scourged with
thongs;—

Of selfish Sovereigns—things of commonest
clay—

Crowned with dim glories of a long Dead
Day;—

For—if these Kings were Royal—as were
right—

Crowns would be heavy and Scepters would be
light.

Impatient?—Yes, of all these sins of self,
That barter true honors for the pride and pelf
Of mud-made millionaires—rotten and rust-
ed,—

Who thrive on "Trusts"—that—never could
be trusted.

188 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Impatient, too, of Statesmen who set snares
To bribe the “Millions” for the—“Million-
aires.”

In spite of all our Science and our Schools,
One Fraud still fattens on a thousand Fools;—
And if the Gods no Savior soon shall send,—
Impatient, yes, impatient of the END,
When all this rotten Fabric shall one ruin
share;—
For even Death itself is better than DESPAIR!

A Contented Cynic.

FRIENDSHIP fools and Love betrays
In a dozen different ways;
Nature—Knowledge—these alone
Make life's best gifts all our own.
Half the blessings mortals choose
Even the lesser Gods refuse,
Knowing that what men most prize
Leave them only loss and sighs.

Pluck me blossoms fair and fine,
Fill my bumpers full of wine;
Friends with feasts are fitted best,
But no comrades stand the test:
In my cellar's scented gloom
In my gardens bloom on bloom,
Rosy draughts that never end,
But I cannot find—one friend.

Nay! Not so:—these Flowers fair,
Sweeter than the fickle fair;
And this wine—a friend that brings
Back the sunshine of dead Springs.

190 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Let me snatch the bliss that flies
Ere 'tis lost in alien skies;
Love and Friendship—I resign,
If you leave me flowers and wine.

Worldlings keep what wealth hath brought;
Man—and maid can both be bought:
Be my gifts—what Nature yields,
Fruit and Flowers of the fields;
Friendship means a bargain where
Biggest fraud gets biggest share;
Love a rose—that wisdom scorns,
Knowing well its fretful thorns.

I shall miss the world's worst scars
If I trust but flowers and stars;
In my Eden bring no Eve—
Lest my heart should learn to grieve.
Friends are not like stars that show
Brightest when the shadows grow;—
Love, too, like the Moon, my dear,
Only comes when skies are clear.

Sold Out.

I've rambled often far-afield,
Piped many a rustic ditty,
But weary now of wandering yield
Forced tribute to the city.
Again, my fortune on my back,
I tramp the streets and alleys,
And half forget the woodland track
That leads to heights and valleys.

I've found a room to suit the taste
Of one who's not rheumatic,
With gilded furnishings ungraced,
A dim-lit ten-foot attic;
Here high above the dust and din
I see the blue skies over,
And when the stars peep shyly in,
Can dream of corn and clover.

From roof to roof I hear the cats
Their nuptial music miawling,
When sunbeams slip through window-slats
I hear the sparrows calling,

And down six stories, in the slum,
Where never prayer or peace is,
I hear the city's busy hum,—
A sigh that never ceases.

Across the crowded roofs I look,
Past many a dome and steeple,
And seem to read, as in a book,—
The hearts of all the people
Who toil and traffic, save and spend,
Yet so few knots unravel;
Beyond where streets and alleys end—
Their sad souls never travel.

But I, at sunset looking far—
Through shadows ever shifting,
See under yonder evening star
Dim crests their white crowns lifting;
Methinks I hear the huntsman's horn—
The ploughman's merry whistle,
See ragged-robin in the corn,
And goldfinch on gray thistle.

And underneath yon cloudy crest
That in blue ridges billows,
I've found forsooth a dainty nest—
Hedged round by oaks and willows;

When street-lamps flash in many a row,
The welcome dusk beginning,
I see a lass,—whom well I know,—
Her hank of brown flax spinning.

She sits and spins a thin fine thread,
And seems to sing beside me;
Deft fingers, that so lightly sped,
With gossamers have tied me;
No fetters wrought by sturdy steel
Could half as firmly hold me;—
Ah! now in happy dreams I feel
That loving arms enfold me.

But no;—say what you will of Love,
He is no boy light-hearted,
With all the Graces “hand and glove,”
And true to friends departed:—
Let those who have the money mock
At those who lack a dinner;
Gold keys can even hearts unlock;—
My rival—won the Spinner.

Thorns and Roses.

ONE day—in years long over—I wandered far
afield,
To look for Love the Rover, and see what gifts
he'd yield;
For some had told me Flowers he brought on
golden morns,
But some, in darker hours, declared he gave
but Thorns.

But I, too dull for doubting, or trusting Cupid's
clue,
All riper counsels flouting, felt Love would lead
me through;
And so I followed laughing light lures that led
me far,
Hope's fountain deeply quaffing beneath Love's
rising star.

But stars will fade and vanish, and fountains
sometimes fail;
Hope's "chateau" rather "Spanish" for feasts
of beef and ale;

Indeed in "Cupid's cottage"—a crazy hut at
best,

So lean at last the pottage—'twill lure no hun-
gry guest.

Were heads forever level, were hearts forever
true,

Love still might safely revel yet never lose
Luck's clue;

But—if in dulcet hours—your heart ripe Wis-
dom scorns,

Be sure,—Love's sweetest flowers shall leave
but rankling thorns.

Hearts Crucified.

HATE hath no deeper Hells than these
Damned depths of Passion's fierce despair;
Graces that gull us—smiles that snare;—
Not stars to guide o'er stormy seas,
But Sirens softly singing where
Death crawls and creeps about their knees,
And in their white arms takes his ease,
Full-fed upon their bosoms bare.
Than Love—Life hath no greater foe;
A treacherous stream—whose dark floods flow
Through Passion's poisoned Paradise;
And yet, as all men learn to know,—
In love what witcheries of woe:—
Bliss crowned with briars,—is Love's device.

To Linette.

A DAINTY little maid was she,
With eyes—like those brown chinquapins
That in the Autumnal days we see—
When first the leafy gold begins
To gild the spreading chestnut tree.

Yet more:—as round those nutty node
A bristling hedge of burs is set,
So she, in spite of love-star lodes
That drew blind hearts into her net,
Rebuffs in varying moods and modes

Tender, yet not by passion stirr'd,
Nay more;—through all her winning ways,
Her heart wings, like a prisoned bird,
Seek freedom, and her fancy strays
Not far—when “wooing” is the word.

Like white Parnassias that shun
The summer's warmer wooing, she
Unfolds no petals to the sun,
But keeps her maiden fancies free
As any Vestal could have done.

198 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Her days slip by in placid guise,
Her brow is smooth, her heart is quiet,
As though Love's tides, that kiss the skies,
Could ne'er by any chance run riot
With storms that only Age defies.

Doubtless the hour shall come that wakes
Her soul to rosier hopes and dreams;—
Upon her sleeping heart there breaks
Love's Dawning with effulgent beams,—
A wondrous oriflamme that shakes

Its fiery folds above the Land
Where Eros reigns—the Lord of All:—
There Youths and Maidens, hand in hand,
Feel sure but blisses can befall
Glad hearts that on its threshold stand.

But I, who found this bud so sweet
Half turned to welcome April's shower,
Shall never in the summer heat
Gather the gift of Love's full flower,
Or feel her quickening pulses beat.

My dreams are buried;—her's but begin
To brighten through Youth's magic mist;
I hold no golden lures to win

Those budding graces yet unkissed:
Into my life no joys slip in

To brighten years that fast grow dark
With gray disasters and defeats;
Hope faltering fades, a dying spark,—
The levin leaps, the billow beats,
And whelms unpiloted my bark.

Some day, in years to come perchance,
She—wedded long—and I long dead,
In passing she may give a glance
And mark the faded blossoms shed
On the white tombstone, where—in trance—

My soul lay slumbering: yet in dim
Halt dreaming fashion shall I hear
Her footfall; in the Darkness grim
Even faint whisperings bring some cheer
Should she but sigh:—*I once knew him!*

No Admittance.

JUST where the streets cross at right angles,
I heard a footfall—light and springing;
Suddenly all the dusk seemed singing
With nightingales, and starry spangles
Stole double radiance from Apollo.
I caught a glimpse of amber tresses—
And fluttering skirts, that helped my guesses,
And so at once essayed to follow.
But as I reached the door, perdition!
There stood a butler of condition,
To grant you entrance with due flourish;
And I shut out, my last wish wilted,
Like some poor lover lately jilted,
My jealous doubts in darkness nourish.

Two of a Kind.

If you'd only stab me, darling, with a dagger—
not a look,

I wouldn't care; but snarling or a sneer I cannot brook.

Your ends you'll never compass if you'll sit
there like a mouse;

But if you'd raise a rumpus—you might scare
me from the house.

You should sometimes air your curses—give
them meat and mother's milk,

And pillory my verses—as “strayed revelers”
clad in silk.

It's patience plainly wasted—this pretending
to be sweet,

For we both have fully tasted—all the bitters
of defeat.

If you have lost your lover, why I have lost my
lass,

And we neither can recover, whate'er may come
to pass.

202 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

We have followed fickle Fancy from his cradle
to his grave,
And Passion's necromancy can no longer salve
or save.

There's no love lost between us, we can both
show scabs and scars;—
And if I have lost my Venus, why you have
found your Mars.

I do not grudge your cavalier—if he'll but pay
your debts;
But then you should not snub, my dear, my bevy
of "Brevets."

A Thievish Grace.

WHY, what a little thief you are!
Your glances stolen from some star
That Heaven set to watch Love's bowers;
Your lips, on which my longings thrive,
Have stolen sweets from every hive,—
Filched fragrance from Spring's fairest flowers.
Your cheeks have ravished from the Rose
The daintiest blush the summer brought,
And in your tangled tresses caught—
The sunset's golden glamour grows.
Your eyes have stolen Heaven's own blue,
Your teeth, I'm sure, are pilfered pearls;—
Your bosom, veiled but half by curls,—
Hath robbed the lily of its hue.

You thrive on thefts from Heaven and Earth,
For Venus watched you from your birth.
And Fortune feasted every whim;
Until you've lightly learned to think
Of even Hymen's golden link:—
Why should your "Highness" bow to him?

204 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

A goddess is not bound by vows!
Upon your altar Glory lays
The greenest of his hard-won bays:—
To Beauty even Honor bows!
For you glib falsehoods whispers Truth;—
And now, though legions are your slaves,
One victory more your fancy craves,
And you would steal my heart, forsooth.

You'd steal a poet's heart, to-day,
To-morrow cast its wealth away
As lightly as a withered bloom;
You'd lure me with a treacherous kiss
To leap into Love's deep abyss,
Then laughing leave me to my doom.
O! fairest witch that ever wore
Heaven's livery in Hell's behalf,—
When lovers die you only laugh;—
'Tis but one added to the score.
O! sweetest thief that ever throve
On stolen sweets from earth and sky,—
Give but one kiss,—that when I die—
That one shall be my treasure-trove.

But no,—I dare not press those lips,
The touch of even your finger tips

Would set my very soul on fire;
Once savoring the sweets you bring,
To miss the fuller feast would sting
And stab me deeper with desire.
If now with jealous pangs I burn,
What deeper depths of dark despair,
To measure—kiss by kiss—the share
That falls to those you never spurn.
I would these doubts could steel my heart,
But you have stolen strength and truth;—
My Age—plays lackey to your Youth,—
Though Hope shall never heal love's smart.

A Song of Silence.

YE Gods, if I could only reach
 Some realm unracked by human speech,
 Where all the gossips were quite dumb,
 And folk but talked by "rule of thumb,"
 Fingers alone to help us out;
 Why, then we'd stick to facts, no doubt,
 And falsehoods (even Fashion's fibs),—
 Stripped naked to their very bibs,
 Would learn, perhaps, at last to blush
 When saintly Silence whispered—**HUSH!**

O! wiser World, whence wicked words
 Are ever banished, whilst the birds
 Sing fetterless and free the songs
 That soothe and salve all lesser wrongs.
 A world—where Music's magic brings
 Love's olive-branch on sounding wings
 From glad shores (nearing through the dark)
 To prisoned souls in storm-tossed Ark:—
 The whispering winds—the sighing seas,
 What clearer phophecies than these?

A wordless World, from Scandal freed,
Where Love but sighs or smiles his screed;
No specious frauds misleading Youth,
No Orators playing tricks with Truth;
No hypocritical pulpiteers
Poisoning with lies the longest ears,
Bribing dull wits (that lack all heaven)
With promised "Dividends" in Heaven:—
Barr'd out all racket and all rhyme,
Even poets reduced to—pantomime.

If this "unruly member" clipp'd
How many sins were safely skipp'd;
If once we tie Temptation's Tongue
The Devil's own darlings all die young;
Few fools the Sirens overreach
By song—but many a one by—Speech:
Stripp'd of all treacherous Eloquence—
Politics would change from Sound to Sense,
And empty hands grow strong enough
To seize rich rascals by the scruff.

More dangerous than the Söldier's blade
Your Orator's tongue—by Party paid;
Wit, battling in behalf of—Might,
Hath often slain dull-witted Right:
If all the good were wise and brave,

208 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

And cracked-brained cowards every Knave,
Long since—in this sad world of ours,—
We'd find no thorns left—only flowers:—
But following Falsehood, for a fee,
Free Speech, alas, hath grown too free.

Therefore, I hold the Gods unwise
To give us Speech that leads to lies:
Enough to gladden worlds like ours
The sight of sun—clouds—mountains—flow-
ers,—

Colors and contours—glow and grace—
To cheer and charm the human race;
With sighs of winds—and songs of birds,
And Music's might—that wants no words
To thrill the soul, needing no tongue
To tell the pæans Seraph's sung.

Hark to the chafing Seas that chant
Requiems to shores of adamant!
Hark to the wordless Winds, whose glees
Set dancing leagues of leafy trees!
Hark to the "Spheres" we yet may reach
Beyond all hope or help of speech!
The stars in silence prophesy
Dim secrets of the darkest sky;
And when at last Death's shadows come,
Behold, our Conqueror, too, is dumb!

Oblivion.

If after life's weary vigil,
With watchings long and waiting
Through lagging years that creep
(Hope lame and even Love half hating),
Comes—to end all sorrows—Death's soft sleep;
Why should we weep?

After life's stress and struggle,
Sharp wounds and woeful wars,
And miseries that never cease,—
Comes now—to heal all scars—
Death's victory, that bringeth peace;—
Oh, glad release!

After the chances and mischances
Of lost games played with loaded dice,
Shall we not hold as best
Escape from inextinguishable vice,
And welcome Death—as rest?
Why further quest?

Is it not better to surrender
The blind God's empty gift

210 Songs of the Sahlkohnagas.

That leaves us half undone,
 Than striving vainly loads to lift
That wiser shoulders shun?
 The shroud's soon spun!

Does the lean harvest merit
 Half the long labor borne
Through bitter—baleful years?
 With hands and hearts out-worn
Even triumphs turn to tears;
 Life's sorrow sears!

Is this life then so radiant
 That we dread the next
May to our sad souls darker seem?
 Ah, Death is kindly, and the Dead unvexed
By even the shadow of a dream:
 Why toil and scheme?

If hopes end—so do doubtings!
 If smiles fade—tears soon dried;
No shadows darken if no dazzling sun:
 'Tis only human vanity and pride
That shrink from soft oblivion
 Through sweet Death won.

April and December.

LET April fool us, if she will,
With smiles so very arch;
One thing is sure, for good or ill,
She can't be bad as March,—
That blustering—boastful month that claims
To be the “first of Spring,”
Though dark December often shames
The sunshine he can bring.

No doubt even April's promised gifts—
Will often prove quite scanty;
Her violets hidden under drifts
Of snow—that well might daunt a
Poor lover who had wandered out
To find his girl a flower;—
First comes a kiss and then a pout,—
First sunshine then a shower.

And so it goes,—sunshine and snows,—
The ficklest month of all the Twelve;
Hardly a single blossom blows—
Though busily the Gardeners delve;

This Maiden Month of all the year
 So changeful is—though charming,
 Now almost melting to a tear,
 And now with smiles disarming.

So maidens in their tender “teens”
 Allure us with shy graces,
 Whilst Love paints all his dearest scenes’
 In Hope’s half-hidden places;
 No bold avowals in broad Day—
 Where Gossip’s ear can hearken,
 But in close coverts far away—
 When Dusk begins to darken.

Such covert kisses sweeter are
 Than Passion’s riper gifts,
 That on such gentle souls would jar
 As on May’s roses—drifts
 Of snow belated—falling fast;
 Ah! timid maids, remember—
 The Summer will not always last,—
 And Hearts have their December.

Let April fool us all she can;
 I’ve had too much of schooling
 From stern Experience—as a Man,
 And now I think some fooling

And follies, touched with fondness, might
 Bring back those golden hours
 When first I marked young Cupid's flight
 Through fields of April flowers.

From all thy honeyed harvests bring,
 Oh, Love's dawn, as a token,
 One blossom of the bounteous Spring,
 A bud but erstwhile broken;
 Yet as I breathe its sweet perfume,
 My heart, alas, remembers
 My life for Aprils hath no room,—
 But only for DECEMBERS!

GLEANINGS.

Madsour the Miser.

IN Accad, the long-forgotten land—
In Nippur, the city long buried in sand—
Lived Mansour, the Miser, in ages old,—
And worshiped the Forty Gods and Gold;
Year by year grew his golden store,
And day by day would he pray for more.

Fearing that others would win his wealth,
He would wander into the wastes by stealth,
There in some desert's hidden cave,
Would bury the gems and gold men crave;
In wretched rags he would steal away
To the coverts close where his treasures lay,
And grasping all his lean hands could hold
Gloat over the glint of his buried gold.

Richer and richer he grew with years,
And he knew no loves—no hopes—no fears,
Save the growing dread that some clown or king

By chance might light on the hidden Thing,—
On the gold and gems that held control
Of his narrow life and his sordid soul.

And it so befell—as he plann'd and schemed,
He fell asleep, and in sleep he dreamed;
Yea, the Forty Gods—from Bab to Bel—
The golden gates unlocked; and the spell
Of darkness broken. Where the seas stretched
blue,

Lo! in dreams his fancies southward flew,
And a hundred leagues from the barren shores
Where the date palm waves and white surf
roars,

See! an island gleams in the glittering sun,
And he felt that the Golden Goal was won.

Surely might Mansour trust to Bel,
And the Forty lesser Gods as well;
Heaven has sent him signs to show
Where the island's golden shores would glow
Like a beacon over the waves afar.
Blindly but bravely he'd follow his star;
Across the waste and over the waves—
Lie ever the lands that the lost soul craves.

216 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Down to the Haven Mansour went,
And he found a craft with its sails all bent;
There was food and drink in the narrow hold,
And the trade soon made and the vessel sold.
The sea was calm and the breeze was fair,
And his hopes made him bold to do and dare.
Never a sailor needed he
To guide his craft o'er the silent sea,
Never should other eyes behold
This gift of the Gods—the Land of Gold.

Haven and home, and palace and palm,
Sink in the North, and the seas are calm;
Only a soft breeze blows to the south,
And bears him away from the Harbor's mouth.
Night after night he sees afar
The Golden Isle like a rising star;
Night after night the great God Bel,
And the Forty lesser Gods as well,
Gladden his dreams with the spell of Gold:
And the warm winds laugh as his sails unfold,
Unfold like the wings of the Dove at dark—
That brought Hope's help to the drifting Ark.

But the crumbs grow fewer day by day,
And water fails;—let Mansour pray,
For his throat burns now with a growing thirst.

Yet the Gods are good and he's known the worst,
For over the seas there shines afar
The haven of hope with its golden bar;
Over the horizon's level rim
A gleam as of sunrise dawns on him;
Nearer and nearer the shores of gold
That glitter with glories as yet untold,
And his bark, as he reaches the Promised Land,
Is beached on a beach of golden sand.

Of golden sands are the gleaming shores,
Of molten gold is the stream that pours;
The rocks are of gold, and instead of shells
Diamonds and rubies,—where the blue surge
 swells.—

Girdle this Land with gems that gleam
Richer than ever Fancy's dream;
Liquid gold all the rivers run,
The summits out-dazzle the shimmering sun:—
Dazed by these growing glories first,
Mansour forgets both hunger and thirst,
Only sees like a Heaven unrolled—
This glorious gleaming realm of Gold

Forgotten the Forty Gods and Bel;
Dazzled and dazed by the golden spell,
He worships only the wealth he sees;

Crouching low, on his bended knees,
 He kissed the bright gems one by one,—
 Each a splinter cleft from some shattered sun:
 Hugs to his heart, with his clutching hands,
 Heap after heap of the golden sands,—
 And what his lean fingers cannot hold—
 Rains down in a shimmering shower of gold;—
 No elusive fancies—or follies—these,
 For he wades in wealth to his very knees,
 And glôats with glad eyes on the jeweled gleams
 And glories that far outstrip all dreams.

But hunger and thirst again awake;—
 By some cool spring will his parched throat
 slake:

Under the shadow of fruitful trees
 Will he eat his fill and be at ease,
 Monarch of more than the mints of man
 Could have coined since this little world began.
 Sole Lord of the Land of Gems and Gold,
 What else for hope could the heavens hold?

But never a tree shows near or far,
 A golden beach and a golden bar,
 Not a green growth graces this wealth untold,
 And when he bends where the river rolled,
 The liquid gold sets his lips on fire

With redoubled thirst, and again desire
Awakes in his soul for the gifts life brings;
For homes that shelter—for hearts that love,
For the Graces of Earth and the stars above;
But here—where the Gates of Gold unfold—
No glory or grace save the gift of gold:
Wealth drops in waves from his finger tips,
But no drop of water to moisten his lips.

And his thirst grows keener:—What is wealth
worth?

What he longs for now is the life of Earth.
What are the Gods who “give”—to him?
What is this Gold but a Despot grim?
Nay, worse, a Devil who mocks his hurt!
What are these diamonds but dross and dirt?
Liquid gold!—could the Gods send worse
To the thirsting soul that they meant to curse?
Gladly he'd barter all these lands
With their rubied rocks and their golden sands,
For one fresh draught from some woodland
spring—
Where the blossoms bud and the birdlings sing.

Minute by minute his thirst grows worse:
Life is despair, yet death a curse,

A curse unending—that leaves no hope;—
Where the soul forever must grieve and grope,
Grove in the darkness that—near or far—
Shows no faint gleam of a rising star.
Never a glimpse of good deeds done
Comes like the glow of a dawning sun;
Never a heart-throb from his youth,
Never a gleam of Trust or Truth.

Here with his lean and grasping hands
Clutching wildly the golden sands,
Here with his thirsting lips burned bare
By the liquid gold;—in his dark despair
He dies,—and dying—finds no spell
Save curses fresh from the Heart of Hell;
In his last gasp—he damns great Bel,
And the Forty lesser Gods as well.

Harold Fairhair !

KING Harold Fairhair lies below
The Ocean's sleepless billows,
Upon a breast of sunless snow—
His weary head he pillows;
The years may come, the years may go,
But still the King lies dreaming,
Untouched by time's unceasing flow,
The same in outward seeming.

The gold yet glitters in his hair,
His ruddy cheek unfaded,
Though in his dreamy eyes a stare—
As though some sorrow shaded
His soul, which yet at times would strive
To break the spells that bind him;
His heart beats only half alive;
'Tis thus the sea-nymphs find him.

Yet, though they sing their Siren songs
To deafened ears,—half waking,
At times,—in shadowy dreams he longs
For some Dawn's sunburst breaking;

He sees afar the rocky capes,
And hears the battle's thunder;—
A thousand fierce and flying shapes
Steal to the caves far under,—

And whisper of the world above,—
Its riotings and roses:—
He dreams again of earthly love;—
The golden gate uncloses,
And to his caverned couch steals in
A gleam of sunlight shifting;
Stirred by some battle's distant din,
His mighty sword uplifting,

He rises; but about him twist,—
In soft and snaky coilings,—
White arms, and pallid lips have kissed
Away all taste for toilings;
He dimly sees the Water Fay—
Above his white couch bending,—
Sinks back; soon quenched this glimpse of
day,—
In deeper darkness ending.

The Blossom's Boast!

AND do you fancy,—says the Flower
(In such soft whispers few can hear her),
That we are blind to sun and shower?
To golden days when Spring draws nearer,—
And winds are warm—and skies grow clearer?

Do you imagine that a Rose
Or Lily—have as little feeling
As Monster Man, who laughing—sows
The World with woes:—Lies, Murder, Steal-
ing,—
Dishonest Thoughts—as well as Dealing—?

In your conceit, no doubt you hold,—
Having counted pistil—stamen—petal,—
That all our secrets have been told,
And stand upon your (mental) mettle,
To prove you know just how to settle

All of Dame Nature's outs and ins,
And ups and downs; her inmost meanings;
How Matter ends,—when Life begins;—

224 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

What are Hope's gifts, and what Love's glean-
ings

From Lust's Augean Stable's cleanings.

But "Flowers" know that Fools are silly
Beyond all reach of floral "greenness";—
Roses "blush for you," and the Lily
Would scorn a mortal Monarch's meanness
As typical of Man's uncleanness.

Hold your heads high and trample under
Soiled feet the Blossom's fragile grace!
That Brutes are brutal—is no wonder!—
But you—who boast of higher race—
Shall turn to dust in our embrace!

We never studied Greek or Latin—
We build no churches—wage no wars;—
But on your "Highnesses" we'll fatten;—
And whether Soldier, Saint or Sage
We whelm you under age after age!

Then go and count your pilfered pelf,—
Your reddened Swords and rusted Crowns,
And try to ask your "better self"—
Whether one blossom on the downs
Is not worth half a score of clowns!

The Shabby Genteel!

My farm is more rocky than rich,
With fields of precipitious pitch;
No harvests of gold they reveal
To rescue the—Shabby Genteel.

My cottage, once somewhat ornate,
Is—fifty years now out of date,
And the road to it rattles your wheel
Should you visit the Shabby Genteel.

My carpets and curtains look worn,
The seat of the sofa is torn,
My platter is tin, and my fork is of steel,
For I'm one of the—Shabby Genteel.

My dinner is not like the Queen's,
But usually bacon and beans;
No "crusted port" shall I unseal,
For I'm one of the—Shabby Genteel.

My coat is not cut in good style,
And my hat is a battered old tile;

226 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

In fact I am "down at the heel,"
For half-souled are the—Shabby Genteel.

If it wasn't for Fashion and Fate,
Luck and Love might yet enter my gate,
But to strive is as hard as to steal
If you're one of the—Shabby Genteel.

The pen is poor pay, and the plow
I could never well handle just now,
For then Fashion surely would feel
I'd lost caste—as a—Shabby Genteel.

Somehow I must keep up the show
Of being a "Squire" you know,
For my Grandfather squandered a deal,
Though I—but a—Shabby Genteel.

How I envy a Tramp on his trips
Who peacefully pockets his "tips,"
Or the Beggar who dances a reel
At the "wake" of some Shabby Genteel

Here I sit by a cold hearth and shun
The World—with its frolic and fun,
Fearing Fortune some day might reveal
The "last rag"—of the—Shabby Genteel.

Not the navvy who handles the pick,
Not the tramp who can dodge if you kick,
Half as helpless as poor fools who kneel
At the—Shrine of the Shabby Genteel.

The Four Heralds of Spring.

(From the German.)

THOUGH March still sang a crazy tune,
Tho' April filched and froze it,
Spring surely shall not wait 'til June
And every sparrow knows it.
As Heralds fair to earth and air
Spring sends four Fairies busy,
Whose pranks and jokes make even the oaks
At last with sun-draughts dizzy.

Our firstling Fairy wields a brush
In most artistic fashion,
He makes the very roses blush
When painting June's ripe passion;
Yet earlier still on every hill,
In every dimpling hollow,
He leaves a dash of greens that flash
When frolic sunbeams follow.

An Artist he, by lassies kissed,
Tho' less by lords admired,

Because he's no "Impressionist,"
And so by Fashion "fired";
But mark in May the wondrous way
He paints you leaf and flower;
One violet blue to-day peeps through,—
To-morrow—roses shower.

An Architect of wide renown
Our second Sprite or Fairy,
Tho' less he haunts the busy town
Than holts and highlands airy;
He seldom strays from woodland ways
Where lilies lift their chalices,
And you must look in leafiest nook
To find his rustic palaces.

All birds of feathers grave or gay
Know best his skill in building;
His rustic grotts and cozy cots
Are graced with gray—not gilding;
Here linnets house, there home of grouse,
And jorees huts and hollows,
And last he weaves, 'neath cottage eaves.
Clay cabins for his swallows.

Our third good Fairy, Vocalist,
Of woodland song the master;

230 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Ere sunbeams chase the morning mist
His scholars learn the faster;
To thrush and throstle this Apostle
Teacheth a saintly song,
And "chatterwit," with wrens that flit,
Shall not be silent long.

This music master wields a wand
That keeps the woods in tune
From April mornings—pale and blond—
To the blushing days of June:
On winnowing wings the blue bird sings,
The throstles thrill on high,
And when the mower's scythe-blade swings,
"Bob White" is in the rye.

But the last and fourth of these Fairies four,
Is a queer—quaint—quizzical elf,
He opens the windows wide, and the door;—
Wastes your dollars and breaks your delf;
Undeterred by Doubt, he wanders out,
A pilgrim through Lorey Land;
His thirst he slakes with the kisses he takes,
And builds his house on sand.

Lo!—the last of these Fairies—a poet,
A lover of legend and lilt,

The Four Heralds of Spring. 231

A troubadour tramp, and all know it;
Yet though ragged his cap and his kilt,
'Tis this frolicsome fay—who hath lured me
to-day

From study—to dabble in song:
On him be the curse, if my wandering verse—
Prove either too learned or too long.

The Gipsy's Guess.

(From the German.)

WITH faltering steps a maiden goes
By hedge of thorn and ellow,
By thickets of the briar-rose,
To where the Fortune-teller,
A sylvan Sibyl of the woods,
Deals out in kind her gipsy goods;
That is—good pay shall bring good luck,
But empty hands no laurels “pluck.”

Here Mother Mazie, gifts I bring,
A cockerel and a pullet;
Two lovers daily sigh and sing,
And ask for buss—or—bullet;
Each wants to have, of course, his way,
Yet I might give them both but,—nay:
A printer one and brags on brains,
The other boasts his goods and gains.

The Gipsy muttered low and long,
Was puzzling—if prophetic:
Laid down the cards, both weak and strong,

With gestures half pathetic;
This Queen of hearts is you, my lass,
And here's a Spade, but let that pass,
And here's the King of Diamonds gay,
But then if not quite bald—he's gray.

And here's a Knave, the Knave of Clubs,
Not yet too old for fooling,
Tho' you will sometimes find these cubs,
In need of steady schooling;
Lo! here is one we've never seen,
He comes as Huntsman clad in green:
How chanced it, lassie, of this third
You never even spoke a word?

Ah, yes; you whisper shyly—Hush!
The third was half forgotten maybe,
But if he ever saw you blush,
And failed to take a hint, the gaby
Could never grumble should he lose
What many a lad would gladly choose.
Your silence, Maiden, is the seal,
Of hopes you never spoke, but—feel.

The Vase and the Virtuoso!

IN these dull and degenerate days
Is there no real esthetic Craze?
Must Art importune to get a fortune
In exchange for a—Peach-blow Vase?

Who would quarrel about the price
Of a—Pitcher from Paradise?
Would a Gold-bug stint the best of his mint,
And regret an art Critic's advice?

This is no jug-handled affair,
But a charming chance "on the square";
And even in China you'll find no finer
Piece of precious old pottery ware.

'Tis made of uncommon clay,
In a very uncommon way,
And by some mysterious method (I'm serious)
The color is gold of Kathay.

Your shoulders, sir, you may shrug,
And call it a "Jolly old Jug,"—
An old painted pitcher—just fit for a ditcher,
Or a flagon for tipplers to hug.

But what do you know of—Design,
Of the Infinite curve and the Line?
Of Ruskinian hints—and Turnerian tints,—
And the arts that are Deep and Divine?

With a little twelve inch rule,
Do you fancy that any fool
Who has the leisure—can fathom and measure
The Artistic Esthetic School?

You are only a mud-made man,
With a soul on the skimpiest plan;
With none of the aerial—esthetic—etherial—
Elixir in your little “tin can.”

You may open your eyes with amaze,
Ridicule our Japanese Craze,
Laugh at our pottery, call it a Lottery;—
But what would you say if it pays?

After all the true worth of a Thing,
Is exactly the Price it will bring;
That is the gist of it—wisdom and wit of it;—
You may say what you choose;—Cash is King!

Christmas After War !

How shall we greet you this Christmas, Saint
Nick ?

With clamor of "crackers" and feasting of
pies ?

Shall we surfeit on egg-nog until we grow sick,
And forget, for a time—that we're weary and
wise ?

Shall we make—like the Russians—a rushin'
advance

On "Turkey,"—whose "merry thought" often
predicts

That even the ugliest girls have a chance,
And Bachelors gay may become Benedicts ?

Shall stockings be filled to the garter with gifts
For the "legions" of chubby-cheeked "infan-
try,"—say ?

Shall we find under cover of Winter's white
drifts

The joys that make even the saddest hearts gay ?

Shall the Ledger be laid. with gaunt Care, on
the shelf,

And the "Imp of the Inkstand" take rest for
a while?

Shall we turn for a moment from profit and
pelf,

And invest, just for change, in the wealth of a
smile?

Shall the "Ule-log" be lit on the hearth, as
of old,

While the "mistletoe" shadows discreetly kind
lips?

Shall diffident lovers grow suddenly bold

As they squeeze "lady-fingers"—just iced at
the tips?

Shall we bury old strifes in the grave of the
year

Whose life is so rapidly ebbing away?

Shall the shadows of Sorrow now suddenly clear,

And the sunshine of Hope gild this glorious
day?

Shall we gladden the "Ragged" with generous
alms,

Shall we cheer the sad-hearted with smiles and
with songs?

238 Songs of the Sahkohnagas.

Shall ever-green hollies wreath ever-green
palms,
And Hope bear the half of our troubles and
wrongs?

In a word:—Shall the Dawn of this Sanctified
Day

Bring peace upon earth and good-will unto all?
If so—gray December shall rival green May,
In spite of the flakes and the flowers that fall.

Let us turn from the battle-scathed wastes of
the Past,
Trusting still that, somewhere in the Desert
ahead,
There lies an Oasis, where we at the last
Shall again find the blooms of the Springs that
are dead.

The Sea's Smiles and Sighs !

WE walked together side by side
Along the margin of the sea ;
We heard the rippling of the tide
That spoke to her, and spoke to me.

To her it lisped in lapsing waves
That kissed the imprint of her feet:—
“ Fair lady, we are willing slaves,
And gladly bear your freighted fleet
Of hopes and fancies to the strand
Of laughing Love's fair Eden Land.”

To me it spoke in monotones,
Hollow and sad as dirges are ;
Souls wrecked and hopeless—made low moans
Where the blue sea's sad verges are.

To me its surges seemed to sigh,
As though from caverns gray and grim
I heard the wailing half-choked cry,
Of some sad soul whelmed in the dim
Deep under, where the shark is hid

Like some sea tiger in his lair;
And with his undulous arms the squid
Coils like a knot of serpents, where
The coral cavern yawns below,
And darkening depths of purple night,
Where phosphorescent phantoms glow,—
Hold shuddering shadows that affright
The senses. Hark! in thunders loud—
The Storm King calls, and sea-maids stitch
For me a winding sheet and shroud.

They beckon, and behold—a niche
Shaped coffin-wise in darkness gapes
Between two shadow-shrouded capes
Of fretted rock; and lo!—I leap,—
A lost soul hurled from deep to deep:—
And she, who watched me from the strand,
Stretched out, alas, no helping hand!

The Tempest's Test.

I LOVE the gloom of sunless skies
Where not one glimpse of Heaven's blue eyes
Foretell Love's benediction;
Through shifting shadows dark and dim—
When all the world seems gray and grim—
'Tis then that stern conviction,
Unlured by Fancy's frolic course,
Finds time to gather faith and force;
Unsiren'd by Hope's silvery song,
Measures the depths of Right and Wrong.
When skies are clear and sunbeams sift
Down Life's wide stream—we aimless drift,
But—when the waves would overwhelm,—
First the true Pilot finds the helm.

The "Swallow's Nest!"

FROM Neckarsteinach down we glide—
With wooded slopes on either side;
Above, upon the ruddy crags,
Old castles wave their ivied flags.

For wisdom who would give a groat?
Our hearts are light, and here we float
With clouds beneath us and above,
Dreaming our April dream of love.

Her hands touched mine, our young hearts beat,
Soft eyes, and then sweet lips, may meet;
She blushes rosily, then sighs:
Ah, youth is happy—if not wise.

Soft floating down the Neckar's stream,
Of Love's bright Eden-land we dream;—
What need of words, when kisses tell
The secrets we have learned so well?

Rough is our boatman, old and gray,
Yet watching in a stolid way
Love's pranks, despite dull heart and wit,
Perhaps he sees the gist of it.

"Young blood is hot," our boatman said,
Whereat the maiden turned her head
And pouted—just enough to show
She understood how that was so.

Ah me! can I be still the same
In heart and soul—in flesh and frame—
With that fond youth who half confessed
His passion at the "Swallow's nest" ?

Alas, in death's eternal calm
She sleeps beneath some Indian palm;
And I, involved in life's cold schemes,
Dare scarce recall Love's earlier dreams.

Though now life's flowers fading fast,—
What help—to mourn the buried past?
Red lips may kiss, white arms enfold,
But new loves cannot match the old.

The New World.

(Not discovered by Columbus & Co.)

I STAND on the Mountain's summit,
And Science and Art combine,
With my pencil and my plummet,
To sketch you a novel design
Of a world without affectation;
Where "sunflowers" never could grow,
Where tints are not all Turnerian,
Nor landscapes all Corot;—
Where Diaz is not dazzling
The dunces with blot and blur,
And where "Arrangements" in "Black and
Yellow"
Don't so frequently occur;—
Where a Whistler in vain might whistle
For a crazy canvas sold,
Where a Wylde but finds a thistle—
Instead of a cabbage in Gold;—
Where Nature is sometimes natural,
Where Love is not always Despair;—
Where the Prince and Plutocrat don't always

Get more than the "Lion's share"
Of the profits and pleasures of Life,
Whilst below—in the sewers and slums—
The horny-handed laboring man
Is starving on kicks and crumbs.

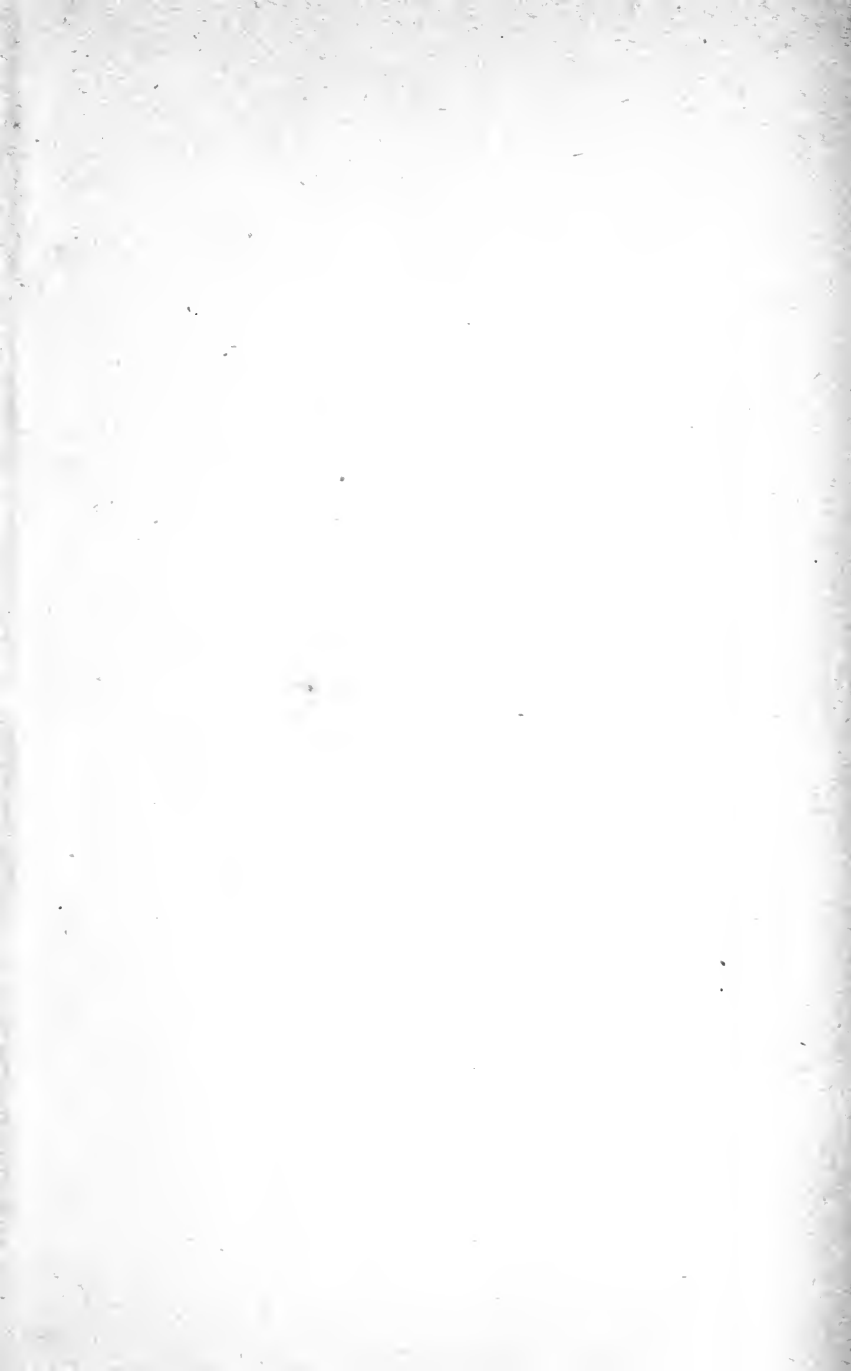
A world where they don't dance "germans,"
Where broadcloth is not better than brain;
Where though children may dabble in dirt-
pies,—

Dirt-daubers just catch the cane;
A world with no Politicians,—
No Party save the Party of Right;
Where Law doesn't laugh at Equity,
And where Justice is stronger than Might;
Where Success is not always the only test
Of merit for Person or Purse;
Where the Thief of a Million no better is
Than a Thief of a thousand, but worse;
Where the Rebel who wins is not greater,
And the Rebel who loses not less;
Where Manhood is not merely Muscle,
And Beauty is not all Dress;
Where the Bullies of Battles are but Butchers,
And Greatness not measured by—Gains;
Where Thorns do not fret Passion's Roses,

Nor Purity's Lily show stains;
 Where whatever the Game we are playing
 We must win by "Honors"—not "Tricks"
 (Though I fear such a world is divided
 From ours by the river called Styx):—
 In a word an Eden "re-constructed"
 Where no merciless Father doth tempt
 His own children; from serpents forbidding
 And Fruitage forbidden—exempt.
 Yet in spite of its manifold merits
 (And they are doubtless all tested and true)
 The Sinner—who sin inherits—
 Prefers probably the "Old" to the "New,"
 And would much rather take his chances
 With the Devil he's known from his birth,
 Than to risk his Fun and Finance
 With a God—too fine for Earth.









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